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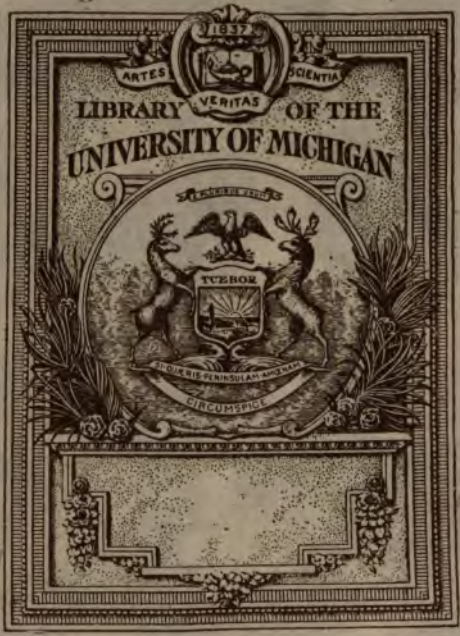

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MANUAL

OF

PREACHING

LECTURES ON HOMILETICS

BY

FRANKLIN W. FISK

PROFESSOR OF SACRED RHETORIC IN CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THIRD EDITION, REVISED

NEW YORK

A. C. ARMSTRONG AND SON

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To

THE ALUMNI

OF

CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

WITH

PLEASANT REMEMBRANCES

AND

BEST WISHES.

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PREFACE.

The aim of this work is, as its title indicates, mainly practical. Although chiefly designed for theological students and young ministers, yet it is hoped that the treatise may be of some service to others in the ministry, who, amidst pressing duties, may find time to look over its pages.

It may be proper to state that the lectures of which the book is composed, are mainly a condensation of material that has been accumulating in the hands of the author during the twenty-five years of his connection with Chicago Theological Seminary. From year to year the lectures in this department have been abbreviated, and the practical exercises increased. Hence this work is intended to set forth and illustrate the principles and rules of homiletics in a very brief and practical manner. Reference is usually made only to those works which are accessible and valuable to the English student.

While the author has availed himself of suggestions from many writers on homiletics,—some of which he is unable to trace to their source,—he is chiefly indebted

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to Dr. George Campbell, Pres. Ebenezer Porter, Prof. Alexandre R. Vinet, Dr. Francis Theremin, and especially to his revered instructor in homiletics, the late Dr. Eleazar T. Fitch.

In treating of the means of attaining skill in homiletics, reference is made to works of contemporaneous writers in this department not for presuming criticism, but solely to put one in possession of whatever is best in the current literature of preaching.

It may be well to add, that the method followed in this volume is, first to take a sermon in pieces and inspect its principal parts, and then to show how to gather materials and form a sermon. First the analysis, then the synthesis.

CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
Sept. 1, 1884.

NOTE.

As the publishers of this work are about to issue a third edition, the author has taken the opportunity to revise it, and to make a few additions.

CHICAGO, *March*, 1895.

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MANUAL OF PREACHING:

LECTURES ON HOMILETICS.

LECTURE I.

THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY OF HOMILETICS—IMPORTANCE—REQUISITES.

It may aid us to derive greater benefit from the study on which we are entering, if, at the outset, we consider the design of the study of homiletics, the importance of the study, and some of the requisites to its successful prosecution.

I. The design of the study of homiletics.

Homiletics has been defined as rhetoric applied to sacred discourse, or more specifically, as stated by Dr. Eleazar T. Fitch, "The science which teaches the principles of adapting the discourses of the pulpit to the spiritual benefit of the hearers." Hence it is the design of the study of homiletics to acquire such knowledge of these principles as will enable one to apply them successfully in preaching the gospel.

Two inquiries here present themselves: (1.) Do certain characteristics of thought, of arrangement and of expression inhere in every well constructed

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sermon, and, (2.) Will the knowledge of such characteristics aid one to make an effective discourse?

In regard to the first question, it is sufficient to reply that a careful examination of discourses which have come down to us attended with a reputation for power, and which also move us when we read them, as well as a careful analysis of effective modern sermons, reveal certain characteristics which inhere in them all, and which can be definitely stated. Now homiletics is simply a body of principles or rules gathered by such searching analysis of the best sermons in every age of the church. It gives the results to which the most successful preachers have attained in the art of sacred discourse. Hence it is a thesaurus of their combined wisdom in the construction of sermons, for each is supposed to have embodied in his discourses the results of his own ripe experience in composition, so that a well prepared treatise, or course of lectures on homiletics, puts the student in possession of the knowledge of the most effective preachers in regard to the composition of sermons.

We are, then, brought to the second inquiry,—Will a knowledge of the results reached by the ablest preachers in the construction of sermons aid one to produce an effective discourse? Now, if there are certain characteristics essential to every effective sermon, it must be evident that he who has mastered them will be, to say the least, more

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likely to construct a good discourse than if he had given to them no attention. Without the knowledge of these principles he may indeed after long and often painful and mortifying experience attain to great excellence in the composition of a sermon, but aside from the facility in composition which he may have thus gained, he has not advanced one step beyond the point at which he would have set out, had he first acquired by the study of homiletics what he has now gained by experience.

He has, at length, after great wandering and much waste of time and strength stumbled into the path in which he might have started. Now the biography of those who have excelled in sacred discourse, proves that what we might have inferred from the nature of the case, is true in fact. Read the biography of any of those distinguished men whose sermons have descended to our time as models of a powerful exhibition of divine truth, and you will find that each gave himself to the study of homiletics, and mastered the principles of that science. He may not, indeed, have studied these principles in a formal treatise. Oftener he may have acquired them from a careful perusal of the discourses of eminent preachers or writers. In either case the result would be the same. For example, Isaac Barrow pored with delight over the writings of the golden-mouthed Chrysostom, termed the "Homer of orators." Jonathan Ed-

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wards was indebted for much of the clearness and power of his sermons to his study of John Locke. Robert Hall from nine years of age made "Edwards on the Will" and "Butler's Analogy" his constant study, and we are able to discern in his terse and forcible style, the fruits of such study.

Thus we find that similar conditions of success prevail in sacred as in secular discourse. In the latter it is well known that all the great masters of speech, whose productions have come down to us, attained to their surprising excellence by the most careful study not only of such rhetorical treatises as they could obtain, but also of the orations of those who had preceded them. Demosthenes was a most diligent student of the speeches in Thucydides; Cicero, a most careful student both of Aristotle and of Demosthenes. So in our time, Brougham devoted his days and nights to the study of Demosthenes, and Webster almost daily studied the speeches of the great Roman orator. Thus from the example of those who in all ages have stood forth masters of speech, whether in secular or sacred discourse, we infer that a knowledge of the principles essential to effective discourse greatly aids one who is striving to attain it.

II. Having looked at the design, let us now notice the importance of the study of homiletics.

This becomes apparent from two considerations —viz., the magnitude of the object sought to be

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gained by the study, and the magnitude of the difficulties to be overcome by the sacred orator.

1. The greatness of the end sought in the study of homiletics—the ability to preach the gospel in the most effective manner—shows the importance of this study. What is the gospel? "It is," Inspiration informs us, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Since, then, the salvation of man rests upon his belief in the great truths of the gospel, it evidently is vastly more important to his highest welfare that he be rightly instructed and persuaded on gospel themes, than on any others. The opinions and practices which he may adopt on secular subjects have to do chiefly with his temporal condition, and the good or evil consequences terminate with the present life, but a wrong belief and practice in respect to the gospel is fatal to his eternal well-being. Hence it is infinitely more important to learn how to address men effectively on the themes of the gospel, than on politics, law, social reforms, or on any or all other topics whatever. Yet upon what themes has most of the eloquence of the world in all ages been expended? For what ends have so many men of the finest genius devoted years of laborious study and practice to become eloquent? Look at the Grecian orator retiring for months together to his solitary cave, and there copying and recopying for the tenth time the orations scat-

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tered throughout the writings of the great historian in order to perfect himself in composition. For what did he subject himself to all this toil? A worthy object indeed,—the freeing of his country from ignoble servitude, and perhaps also, the linking of his name with her glory.

But compare this object with that which every minister of Christ professes to have in view—the salvation of immortal souls—and how insignificant it appears! Yet who has ever thought that the efforts of Demosthenes to become eloquent were too great for the end he sought? The unanimous verdict of his countrymen and of all posterity has applauded his course. And the efforts of the great Roman orator were scarcely inferior to those of the Grecian. Devoting himself for years, as he tells us, to the study of oratory under the best teachers which his country afforded, he then visited Greece, and spent two years abroad, pursuing his favorite study. For what were all these efforts put forth? At best, to serve and exalt his country, but oftener to exalt himself. Look, now, down through the ages from that period to the present, and note that objects like these have called forth the sublimest eloquence. Gather, now, all these secular interests, and place them in a balance over against the well-being of even one immortal soul, and tell me, if you can, how much the latter outweighs the former. It is a striking proof of

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the stupefying effect of depravity on the heart and mind, and as a consequence, of the slight hold which the most sublime and terrible truths have on the best men, that comparatively so few of the Christian ministry have been "eloquent men, and mighty in the Scriptures."

2. The importance of the study of homiletics is also seen from the magnitude of the difficulties to be overcome by the preacher, arising,

(1.) From the nature of Biblical truth. Many of these truths are difficult of elucidation. They relate to a Being not cognizable by the senses—a Being of whose attributes and designs it is difficult for the finite mind to conceive. In this respect, many of the themes of the gospel widely differ from those which are discussed in politics, law, and other secular departments. In these provinces we have to deal chiefly with questions of fact taking place before our eyes,—questions settled by testimony, observation, and experience, and which usually do not require the highest degree of skill for their elucidation. But he whose mission is to set forth the sublime truths and principles of Christianity, and to point out their application to the multiform and ever varying relations of human life, needs not only to apprehend these truths, principles, and relations himself, but also to acquire such a degree of skill in their presentation, as shall make others also understand them.

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Another obstacle which the preacher must surmount arises, (2.) From the necessity of a frequent repetition of divine truths. Secular oratory has chiefly to deal with occurrences in personal and national life, and rarely goes behind them to discuss principles. In the profession of law, for example, most of the cases argued in the courts relate to questions of fact, as, did A kill B?, and if so, was the act done with malice aforethought? When these questions have been passed upon, the question as to the punishment which A is to receive, is also settled, for the law defining murder is explicit, and needs no exposition or argument to make it plain. Hence, as discussions in the legal profession mostly relate to the occurrences of daily life, which are well-nigh numberless and ever varying, it is manifest that the themes of these discussions will always be fresh and attractive to an audience. It is far otherwise with the themes of the gospel. The truths upon which the faithful preacher must chiefly dwell, are very few. These he must repeat Sabbath after Sabbath, and year after year, throughout the whole course of his ministry, and though he strive never so earnestly to clothe them with flesh nd represent them in life, still, with his happiest illustrations, he will never be able to impart to them the freshness and interest which the occurrences in real life will of themselves give to an equal number of truths in law or politics. Hence

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it is of great importance that the sacred orator acquire such a high degree of skill in the presentation of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity as shall enable him at all times to impress them with vividness and power upon the hearer.

Still another difficulty to be overcome by the preacher, arises, (3.) From the moral condition of the hearer. One of the first doctrines which meets the eye of a reader of the Bible is the depravity of the human heart—not simply its destitution of holiness, but its alienation from God, and disinclination to all right moral action. The preacher is taught this truth on almost every page of the inspired word, it is inculcated in his theological training, and embodied in the creed of the church to which he is called to minister, yet perhaps there is not one of the great doctrines of the Bible which he is more apt to overlook in his weekly ministrations. He does not daily meet his people in the marts of trade, and throw himself athwart their selfishness, but he sees them chiefly in the social circle, or on the Sabbath, when they are put on their good behavior, and hence, in opposition to his creed, he finds himself believing that his people are at heart what they appear to be on the surface of the life, and that they will receive with avidity the truths which they have called him to dispense to them. But his experience will be exceptional, if a brief ministry do not convince him that the

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declarations of the Bible are to be trusted before his own deductions,—if he do not at times find himself thoroughly disheartened at the slight impression which the presentation of the most awful truths will make upon his hearers. He will find not a few of them utterly indifferent if not hostile, to the great themes on which he must dwell. They will listen to him with decent respect, and if he shall so adorn the truth as to gratify their taste, with admiration, but it will often be an admiration rather of the manner than of the matter. Were we to continue the parallel which we have run between the clerical and legal professions, we should also in this respect discern a vast difference between them. The barrister rises to address an audience never indifferent either to the topic on which he is to speak, or to its issues. He is sure of having the earnest attention both of the bench and of the jury—those whom he most desires to interest, and from whom he is to receive the decision. This manifest interest on the part of the audience greatly encourages and assists the pleader. The interest shown by hearers in a theme, makes even an indifferent speech effective. Now the preacher has not only no interest taken by some of his audience in his theme to sustain him, but he also has in its stead, to depress him, the conviction that the truths which he utters are distasteful to many of his hearers. He needs, therefore, to add to great wisdom the

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highest degree of skill so to present truth to his audience that by divine grace it may become to each "the power of God unto salvation."

Yet another obstacle to be overcome by the preacher arises, (4.) From the intellectual condition of the hearer. Truth is made to affect the heart and life through the intellect. One evidently must perceive a truth, before he can feel and act in view of it. And the degree to which he apprehends a truth and sees its manifold relations, will ordinarily be the measure of its power over him. It is thus in secular truth, it is equally so in religious truth, for the laws of mind in regard to each are the same. Yet from this constitution of the human mind arises one of the greatest difficulties encountered by the preacher, since he is compelled to make his hearers clearly see a truth which he wishes to make them feel. But throughout the whole range of truth which comes before the mind of man, there is not one department to which he does not address himself with more intellectual vigor than to religious truth. On any other subject a speaker who has anything to say worth the hearing, will have an attentive audience prepared to follow him with vigor at every step of his discourse. The preacher alone finds his audience listless and indisposed to intellectual exertion. This is largely traceable to the state of heart which renders them indisposed to apply themselves to truths

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respecting which they feel, at least, an indifference. But this indisposition to intellectual effort is greatly increased by the physical condition of the hearers. Most of them have used up during the week all the physical resources at their command, and bring to the "house of God" on the Sabbath bodies so thoroughly exhausted that they are unable to apply their minds vigorously to any subject whatever. There is also in the occasion itself that which seems to dissuade from intellectual exertion. It is a stated occasion recurring every seventh day, with such perfect regularity as to divest it of novelty, which greatly promotes intellectual exertion. The hearer goes to the "house of God" perhaps as uniformly as to his own table, and often listens to the sermon with about as much exertion of the intellect as he employs at his daily meals. Note, on the contrary, how much the orator on secular themes is indebted to the occasion for the earnest attention he receives from his auditors. It is a time of high political excitement. The country is agitated on a question, the right decision of which is esteemed by all essential to the prosperity, and even to the perpetuity, of the nation. Let, now, two champions representing the opposite sides of this question come before an assembly of the people to advocate each his own views, and with what intense interest does every one of that crowd listen to every word, thought, and argument that fall from their lips

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The occasion has so aroused the intellectual energies of the audience, that each listener gives the whole force of his mind to the thoughts brought before him. Such occasions were those when Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Douglass in their contest for the United States senatorship debated national questions before the people of Illinois.

Or take a case which frequently occurs in the practice of law. A man well known to a community is found dead, with marks of violence upon his person. The people of the neighborhood are to a man under high excitement. The supposed murderer is apprehended and committed to prison. The day of trial comes, and the people throng the court-room, each intensely eager to hear, to weigh and to pass upon the testimony and the arguments brought forward on either side. How greatly must such an occasion aid the speaker who has a sound argument to offer! Now occasions like these to which I have referred are constantly recurring in politics and law, not generally indeed presenting questions of equal magnitude, but always exciting to a greater or less degree the minds of the people in the subject discussed. Even the occasion of a bar-room caucus, a town meeting, or a trial before a "Justice of the peace" brings together a more interested and attentive audience than usually gathers on the Sabbath to listen to the words of eternal life. The preacher alone of all

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public speakers not only receives no assistance from the occasion on which he speaks, but often positive injury, so that in addition to all the other obstacles which crowd the path to his success, he must contend even against the occasion itself! How greatly, therefore, does he need to make himself master both in theory and practice, of the principles which lie at the foundation of all effective preaching!

III. Having noticed the design of the study of homiletics, and its importance to the preacher, let us now mark certain requisites to the successful prosecution of this science.

1. The first requisite is a love for the work of the preacher. A love for one's chosen employment is essential to a thorough knowledge of it, in any department of effort, but especially so in the learned professions, each of which requires so vast an amount of intellectual labor to master its principles. Yet in no one of them, as we have seen, is it so difficult to excel as in the clerical profession. The manner, too, in which its principles are taught,—and perhaps necessarily,—seems to require for their mastery an unusual amount of love for the preacher's work. For there are fewer outside attractions to the study of homiletics to captivate the mind than pertain to the study of either of the other learned professions. In the study of law, for example, the student is constantly

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stimulated to intellectual effort by the novelty of the combinations which its principles daily form in real cases before his eyes in the court-room. The occasion, the learned counsel, and, at times, the prisoner, and the eager crowd, all combine to in cite him to master the legal principles on which the decision of the case must rest. This great advantage which the student of the law enjoys, is so well put in the "Dialogue on Orators" commonly ascribed to Tacitus, that I cannot do better than to give the passage in which, speaking in the person of Messala, the author describes the training by which not a few youth in the better days of the Roman republic became eminent orators.— "Among our ancestors," he remarks, "that youth who was being prepared for the forum and eloquence, already trained by a course of domestic discipline, was taken by the father or by relatives to the orator who was holding the first position in the State. He was accustomed to follow him, to attend him; to be present at all his pleadings, whether in courts of judicature, or in the assemblies of the people, so that he learned even to catch up his altercations, and to take part in his contentions and, if I may so say, he learned in battle to fight ('pugnare in proelio disceret'). From this he gained great experience, great firmness. A large amount of judicial experience forthwith fell to youth pursuing their studies in the midst of so much light, and

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among the very crises themselves, where no one with impunity says anything foolishly, or inappropriately, that both the judge does not disapprove, and the opposing counsel cast in his teeth, in fine, that the members of the Bar do not spurn. Therefore they were forthwith imbued with a true and incorrupt eloquence, and though they attended on one, yet they were observing all the advocates of the same age in very many, both causes and trials, and were having the advantage of the most diverse tastes of the people themselves, by which they easily ascertained what in each orator was approved, or was displeasing. So that neither was there wanting to them an instructor—a most excellent indeed, and choice one,—to furnish the face of eloquence, not its likeness, nor were there wanting adversaries and rivals fighting with the sword, not with foils ('ferro, non rudibus dimicantes'), but there was an auditory ever full, ever new, both of those hostile and of those favoring, so that things well spoken did not pass unnoticed."[1]

What a graphic description has the writer here given of the training of students of the law in times nearly two thousand years later than his own! And who cannot see that such a method of discipline would of itself make one in love with his chosen profession?

If, now, we turn to the medical profession

[1] "De Oratoribus Dialogus." Sec. xxxiv.

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we shall here also find that the manner in which its principles are taught, materially contributes to increase the interest which the student of medicine may have felt when he entered on its study. Having gained some knowledge of the technicalities of the science, he is, at once, introduced to the organism which is to be his study throughout life. The human body henceforth becomes his teacher, and at every step of his progress incites him to new effort.

Turn now to look at the student of divinity as he approaches the close of his theological training. Hitherto he has been viewing the "disjecta membra" of the Christian system, trying to fit bone to bone and joint to joint, and now he comes to address himself to the work of putting flesh upon these "dry bones" that the Spirit of the Lord may come into them and give life and power. But unlike the student of medicine, he has no real body to aid and incite him in his work, or if he have a subject to dissect, it is usually one manufactured for the occasion. Nor has he, like the student of law, a combination of outward incidents to impart to him new zest for his work. Hence he must mainly rely on his love for his profession to incite him to a mastery of its principles.

2. A second requisite to the successful study of homiletics is a just appreciation of the magnitude of the preacher's work. A proper estimate

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of the greatness of this work as gathered from the vast results awaiting it, will materially aid one to enter on the study of the science, a knowledge of which is so essential to his success in the ministry, with a spirit not to be daunted by the obstacles many and great which will confront him. The thought of the sublime mission for which he has been accounted worthy, will daily abide with him, strengthening and sustaining him in the midst of his toil, and firing him with new zeal to make himself a master in his sacred calling. Then, too, the nobleness of the reward awaiting the faithful preacher serves to show the greatness of his mission. What a sublime recompense has he before him, compared with objects for which the ambitious youth of the ancient republics strove! What are empty plaudits and fading wreaths, or places of earthly honor and power, contrasted with "shining like a star forever and ever" as the reward of turning many to righteousness! And yet what power over men had such objects to drive them to lonely caves, and to weary preparation for the Pnyx and the Forum! Let him who is training himself for a work and a reward incomparably greater than any which earth can offer, gaze upon them, until he shall feel their power coming over him, and girding him to high endeavor.

3. A third requisite to the successful study of homiletics is a proper appreciation of the diffi-

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culties of the preacher's work. A clear view of the obstacles which he must encounter in his profession, will make him all the more in earnest to render his preparation as complete as possible. Let him seek to gain a clear conception of the difficulties which, to become a successful preacher, he must overcome,—arising from the nature of divine truths, from the necessity of their frequent repetition, and from both the moral and intellectual condition of those whom he will be called to address, and he will feel that when he shall have done his best, and availed himself of all the aids within his reach, he will even then go forth to his mission but poorly qualified for this most difficult of all professions. This feeling will strengthen his purpose, and give energy to his efforts to master the science.

4. A fourth requisite to the successful study of homiletics is a realization of the need of Divine assistance. On this point it is not necessary to dwell. For it is evident that without Divine aid one, though he were to become master of speech, would fail to preach effectively a gospel whose power lies not so much in "wisdom of words" as in the presence of the Holy Spirit. An abiding conviction of his need of Divine aid will lead the student to blend all his efforts with prayer.

5. It remains to notice a fifth requisite to the successful study of homiletics—a willingness

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to submit to judicious criticism. It might seem unnecessary to name this point, and it would be, were there not those who uphold in theory that to which they are unwilling to conform in practice. Few can be found who will deny the great value, to the student in homiletics, of candid and intelligent criticism on his efforts in this department, and perhaps as few who will submit to it with thankfulness. Let, then, such criticism be freely and kindly given, and as kindly received.

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LECTURE II.

THE MEANS OF ATTAINING SKILL IN HOMILETICS—RHETORICAL TREATISES—MODELS IN LITERATURE—LITERARY COMPOSITION.

In order to become skillful in this science, careful attention should be given to the more important treatises on both general and sacred rhetoric; to models in both secular and sacred literature; and to one's own efforts in literary composition.

Let us notice these in their order.

I. Treatises on general rhetoric. Since the principles which lie at the foundation of every species of literary composition are the same, general rhetoric includes the principles of sacred rhetoric, and should be studied before attention is given to homiletics.

The ablest work on general rhetoric, though the most ancient extant, is Aristotle's Rhetoric (*"Τέχνης Ρητορικης"*). It should be mastered by him who would become skilled in the art of persuasion. Later writers on rhetoric have largely borrowed from this prince of rhetoricians. He shows won-

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derful knowledge of human nature, and sets forth the means by which persuasion can be effected. The chief defect of the treatise is its low estimate of the moral nature of man, rarely teaching to appeal to that which is noblest in him.

Cicero, in his work on the orator, ("De Oratore,") sets forth the methods by which he became the consummate orator he was; and Quintilian, in his training of the orator, ("De Institutione Oratoria,") gives in a more systematic form the rules after which the great Roman orators had fashioned themselves.

Of modern works on general rhetoric, Dr. George Campbell's "Philosophy of Rhetoric" is the ablest. It does not profess to be a full rhetorical treatise, but so far as it goes, it is very able.

Dr. Hugh Blair's "Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres," delivered for twenty-four years in the University of Edinburgh, and published by him when he retired from his duties in the University in 1783, has long been a favorite treatise in Great Britain. It abounds in good sense, but is neither very original nor profound. The best part of the work is that on Poetry.

Dr. Richard Whately's "Elements of Rhetoric" is more original and suggestive than Dr. Blair's treatise. It is a good hand-book, and well repays study.

Professor Henry N. Day's "Art of Discourse"

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is well worth perusal. Its analysis and arrangement are excellent.

Dr. Francis Theremin's Rhetoric, entitled "Eloquence a Virtue: or, Outlines of a Systematic Rhetoric," translated from the German by Professor William G. T. Shedd, is, perhaps, the most original and profound work on the subject of which it treats, that has appeared since the time of Aristotle. It should be the preacher's manual in this department.

A treatise from the pen of Pres. John Bascom, entitled "Philosophy of Rhetoric," is an original and suggestive work, and is a valuable addition to this department of literature.

II. Treatises on sacred rhetoric. Systematic works on homiletics are comparatively few, and mostly of modern date. Only those which are accessible and valuable to the English student, need here be named.

One of the earliest systematic treatises on sacred rhetoric, is "Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon." Its author, Rev. John Claude—a distinguished minister of the French Reformed Church at Charenton (near Paris),—died in 1687, and the work, written to aid his son in preparation for the ministry, was published in French the year after his decease. It was introduced to the English public in 1778, through a translation by the Rev. Robert Robinson, a distinguished Bap-

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tist minister of Chesterton, England, in two octavo volumes of five hundred pages each, with copious and learned notes from his own pen. Indeed, the notes themselves, scholarly, discriminating, and often witty, are as valuable as is the treatise itself. The essay is well worth reading. For half a century it was the standard work on homiletics. and gave law to the English pulpit.

The next treatise in the order of time, as of importance, is Fénelon's "Dialogues on Eloquence, particularly the Eloquence of the Pulpit," written by Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambray (born 1651, died 1715). Although a very small volume, it contains many excellent thoughts, and practical suggestions. Access to the work can be had in the volume entitled "The Preacher and Pastor," and also in "The Young Preacher's Manual," compiled by President Ebenezer Porter.

A still smaller work than Fénelon's, but equally abounding in valuable suggestions, is Dr. Philip Doddridge's "Lectures on Preaching, and the several branches of the Ministerial Office," delivered near the middle of the eighteenth century, to the successive classes which he instructed for the ministry (b. 1702, d. 1751). The lectures were gathered mostly from notes taken by his pupils, and though brief, they embrace a great variety of topics—as, for example, directions for the com position and delivery of sermons; for public prayer;

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catechising; administering the sacraments; and pastoral duties; yet they are all discussed with the good sense which characterizes whatever Dr. Doddridge has written.

Soon after the publication of Dr. Doddridge's Lectures, a larger and more elaborate treatise came from the pen of Dr. Campbell, entitled, "Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence." They were prepared for the students of divinity whom he instructed in Marischal College, and were first delivered in 1772 and 1773, and given to the world near the close of that century. The lectures are very able, and they constituted at the time, the best treatise on homiletics in the English language. Later writers in this department have been largely indebted to these lectures.

Following at some interval the publication of Dr. Campbell's Lectures, came Dr. Ebenezer Porter's "Lectures on Homiletics, and Preaching, and on Public Prayer," given to the public in 1834. With the exception of a small work by Cotton Mather,—"The Student and Preacher,"—it was the first American treatise published on homiletics. It abounds in wise practical suggestions, and is worthy of being carefully read by the student in this department. The few lectures on "Public Prayer" which it contains, are valuable.

The next important treatise in the order of time is Rev. W. Gresley's "Ecclesiastes Anglicanus

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being a Treatise on Preaching as adapted to a Church of England Congregation, in a Series of Letters to a Young Clergyman," and published in 1840. The author has largely drawn from former treatises. The chief value of the work lies in the discussion of text-sermons, and subject-sermons. The book is worth reading.

Prof. Henry J. Ripley's "Sacred Rhetoric; or, Composition and Delivery of Sermons," was given to the public in 1849. It is a very modest treatise in which the author gives full credit for his indebtedness to other writers, particularly Whately. Its chief value, as in the case of Gresley's treatise, lies in its discussion of text-sermons and subject-sermons. About one-fourth part of the book is taken up with a reprint of Dr. Ware's excellent "Hints on Extemporaneous Preaching."

Prof. A. R. Vinet's "Homiletics; or, The Theory of Preaching," published in French in 1840, but given to the English public in 1853, is the ablest work which had appeared on the subject of homiletics proper. It is not so practical as the former treatises, and is too abstruse and full for a handbook.[1]

Prof. Daniel P. Kidder's "Treatise on Homiletics; designed to illustrate The True Theory and Practice of Preaching the Gospel," is a well

[1] A. R. Vinet was Professor of Practical Theology at Lausanne in Switzerland, born 1797, died 1847.

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prepared work, and contains many useful suggestions. The appendix containing an outline of the "Literature of Homiletics," is very valuable.

Prof. William G. T. Shedd's "Homiletics and Pastoral Theology," is an original, fresh, and suggestive treatise, but does not include a full discussion of the subject. The chapters on "General and Special Maxims for Sermonizing," are excellent.

Prof. James M. Hoppin's "Office and Work of the Christian Ministry," contains a careful and scholarly discussion of the various parts and qualities of a sermon, and is well worth reading. The revised and enlarged edition, "Homiletics," is greatly superior to the first.

Prof. John A. Broadus' "Preparation and Delivery of Sermons," is a very practical treatise packed full of good sense and sound learning, and is the result of many years' experience in teaching homiletics in the class-room. Part V. on the "Conduct of Public Worship," is especially valuable.

Rev. George Winfred Hervey's "System of Christian Rhetoric," is a large and able work, in which the author, as he says in his Introduction, makes "a well-meant attempt to build a system of Sacred Rhetoric on what he has been led to regard its only proper foundation,"—the preaching of Christ, of the Apostles, and Prophets. The manner as well as the matter of their preaching, the author regards as the model for pulpit orators in

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every age. He remarks, (Introduction, page 4), "The public addresses of Moses and the other Hebrew prophets, the sermons of our Divine Master, the sacred speeches of Peter, Stephen, and Paul, and the inspired biographies of these, together with the Scripture precepts on preaching, are the quarries to which we are beholden for the most solid, as well as the most polished parts of our work." He would also in a subordinate way use such preachers as "Chrysostom, Augustine, Luther, Wesley, Whitefield, and other such men as have afforded us valuable materials wherewith to buttress and to window this Homiletical structure." And he would not discard, but use with caution, the instructive examples and precepts of the Greek and Roman orators and rhetoricians. The treatise contains many valuable thoughts and suggestions, and shows wide reading in its author, but in his effort to give unity to his system, he seems to carry his theory too far. The work will well repay reading.

Prof. Austin Phelps' work, entitled, "The Theory of Preaching," is a very valuable contribution to homiletic literature. It comprises the lectures which, for thirty-one years, were delivered to successive classes in Andover Theological Seminary. The volume discloses wide reading and excellent judgment, and may be justly regarded as among the ablest of American treatises on homiletics.

Rev. John W. Etter's treatise on homiletics,

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entitled "The Preacher and his Sermon," contains a fresh, full, and, perhaps, somewhat diffuse treatment of a great variety of topics relating to the pulpit. The work abounds in appropriate quotations, shows extensive reading in its author, and is worthy of careful perusal.

To these systematic works on sacred rhetoric should be added such less formal treatises as Dr. J. W. Alexander's "Thoughts on Preaching," Pres. Wayland's "Ministry of the Gospel," Dr. N. Murray's "Preachers and Preaching," Rev. H. W. Beecher's "Yale Lectures on Preaching," Dr. John Hall's "God's Word through Preaching," Dr. W. M. Taylor's "The Ministry of the Word," Rev. Phillips Brooks' "Lectures on Preaching." Dr. R. W. Dale's "Nine Lectures on Preaching," Bishop Simpson's "Lectures on Preaching," Dr. Howard Crosby's "The Christian Preacher," and Dr. R. S. Storrs' "Conditions of Success in Preaching without Notes." Each of these volumes will well repay careful reading.[1]

III. Models in secular literature.

1. Ancient classics in poetry, history, and oratory. Of these should be named Homer; Thucydides, — particularly the speeches in his "History of the Peloponnesian War," — the Panegyricus of Isocrates; the Gorgias of Plato; Virgil; Horace; and especially the orations of the

[1] For further references see note, p. 38.

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eminent Grecian and Roman orators. There can be no question as to the great benefit to the student of homiletics, of a careful and constant perusal of these masters of speech. Although they should not be servilely copied, yet a careful study of them cannot fail to refine the taste, and give power and finish to the expression.

2. English classics. Here is a vast and luxuriant field through which the student in homiletics may range with constant delight and profit. First of all, let him study the early English writers —Chaucer, Spenser, and their contemporaries. They should be studied mainly for their excellence in the use of the pure Anglo-Saxon. Especially should Chaucer be studied by him who would master the English tongue. Spenser in his "Faerie Queene"[1] says of him—

> "Dan Chaucer, well of English undefyled,
> On Fames eternall beadroll worthie to be fyled."

The works of Shakespeare and Milton should be carefully studied until they become familiar,—the prose of the latter as well as his poetry. Study the majesty of his prose writings as seen in his "Areopagitica, or Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing," and if you would see by what process of discipline he brought himself to this excellence in composition, read his letter "On Edu-

[1] Book 4, Canto 2, st. 32.

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cation," to "Master Hartlib," in which he gives an outline of a course of study for boys designed for a liberal education.

The orations of the British orators of the times of Burke, Pitt, and Fox will not be overlooked by the earnest student of homiletics. Especially should he study the writings of Edmund Burke. If he will carefully read the "Letters of Junius," he will be but an unapt scholar, if he do not learn from them how to express his thoughts more forcibly. Addison and "George Eliot" will teach him how to express his thoughts gracefully.

Nor should he neglect to study the productions of the best American authors, as the "Federalist"; the orations of Webster and Everett; and the writings of Irving and Hawthorne.

IV. Models in sacred literature.

The works in this department of literature worthy of careful study are very many. Only those which are easy of access to the English student, and of especial excellence, will here be named. The sermons particularly commended to your attention, are those of Dr. Isaac Barrow, Archbishop Tillotson, Rev. James Saurin, Rev. John Howe, Dr. Robert South, Dr. Jeremy Taylor, Rev. John Wesley, Rev. Robert Hall, Dr. Thomas Chalmers, Rev. Frederick W. Robertson, Dr. Thomas Guthrie, Dr. Henry Melvill, Dr. Alexander Raleigh, Dr. Alexander Maclaren, Dr. John Caird, Dr. Joseph Parker,

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Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon; and, of American productions, the discourses of Pres. Jonathan Edwards, Pres. Samuel Davies, Dr. John M. Mason, Pres. Timothy Dwight, Dr. Nathanael Emmons, Dr. Edward D. Griffin, Dr. Horace Bushnell, Pres. T. D. Woolsey, Dr. W. M. Taylor, Bishop Phillips Brooks, and Prof. Edwards A. Park.

If the student have not access to these works, he will find an able sermon from each of most of these authors in the two volumes of Fish's "History and Repository of Pulpit Eloquence," which, together with a third volume entitled "The Pulpit Eloquence of the Nineteenth Century," will furnish him with able discourses from many of the distinguished preachers of the Christian Church. Especially let him not omit to study that best of all English models in the forms of presenting divine truth to the popular mind, as also in force, beauty, and variety of expression,—the English Bible.

V. One's own efforts in literary composition.

The student in homiletics will receive little aid from the works which have been named, unless he shall intelligently and carefully follow in practice the principles which they teach, and the examples which they furnish. No study of rhetoric and of literary models can take the place of careful and frequent composition. "The pen," says Cicero, "is the best and most excellent producer and

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teacher of speaking."[1] This opinion he repeats again and again throughout his works, thus clearly showing the high estimate which this prince of writers and orators placed on careful composition as a means of attaining excellence in speech. The same view has been taken by the most distinguished writers in every age. Isocrates composed with most scrupulous care. Demosthenes seemed equally solicitous to form a style which should give to his orations the greatest effect when spoken. Dr. Barrow wrote some of his discourses three times over. Bishops Tillotson and Atterbury were no less attentive to the expression of their thoughts. The great labor which Robert Hall and John Foster expended on their style is well known.[2] Let him who would gain the heights of power on which those masters of speech stood, address himself with equal diligence and care to the improvement of his style.

Manner of studying literary models.

I. Study models with reference to the peculiar excellence of each. As no composition is perfect, so there is none that surpasses all others in every respect. Each recognized model is distinguished for some peculiar excellence, which should be care-

[1] "Stilus optimus et praestantissimus dicendi effector ac magister. De Oratore 1, 33.

[2] See Ryland's Life of John Foster Vol. II. pp. 8 and 12.

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fully observed. Let us note a few of those qualities to which our attention should be particularly directed.

1. Study models with reference to the proper selection of words. Read attentively those authors that excel in this respect, and note the care with which they have chosen their words. Addison and Irving are fine examples under this head, as also Tillotson and Atterbury. Robert Hall was as fastidious in selecting words, as thoughts.[1]

One of the best models of just and forcible use of words is the English version of the Bible.[2]

2. Study models with reference to the proper arrangement of words. Choice words when thrust into poorly constructed sentences become shorn of much of their beauty and power. Hence a good arrangement of words is as essential to effective writing as a good selection of words. The works of the authors just now named, are as fine models of admirable construction, as of choice language. Note carefully the manner in which these skillful writers marshal their words into phrases and sentences so as to make them the most effective.

3. Study models with reference to the proper development of thought. The words of a writer may be well chosen, and his sentences well constructed, while the thought which he would prove

[1] See Harper's Ed. of Hall's works, Vol. I., p. 22, also Vol. IV., p. 50.
[2] See remarks of Robert Hall, Vol. III., p. 34.

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or illustrate, is but indifferently set forth. His arguments and illustrations produce little effect, because not skillfully chosen or developed. To attain excellence in this part of composition is more difficult than in any other. It can be reached only through careful study of the laws of conviction and persuasion, and of the best models, together with constant and vigilant practice. For the best model in the development of thought, let one go to Demosthenes.

II. Study models independently.

No mere copying of another's excellences of style will make a superior writer. One's manner of writing and speaking should grow out of himself, and be a true expression of himself. A preacher should have his own manner of writing, and of speaking, as of walking. "The style," says Buffon, "is the man." It is the man expressing what is in him according to his own laws of thought and utterance. He ought, therefore, not to attempt a misrepresentation of himself in his style, but only the correction of what in it may be awkward and disagreeable. If he endeavor to go beyond this, he will deprive himself of power. He will be most effective as an orator, when he develops his theme according to his own laws of thought and expression. Be yourself, then, while adopting the excellences of others

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III. Study models through life.

Not to speak now of the great pleasure which the habitual perusal of these works will give to a cultivated intellect, and a refined taste, or of the wealth of thought which they will bestow, let us notice simply two beneficial results of this practice.

1. A continual study of models will tend to keep a preacher from deteriorating in the literary character, and in the effectiveness of his discourses. There seems to be an innate tendency in man to fall from whatever excellences he may attain. It is well nigh as manifest in literature as in morals. In no literary profession is this tendency so strong as in the ministerial. The multitude of duties that are ever thronging a pastor tend greatly to work injury to his pulpit efforts, by making him, in the hurry of preparation, less careful both of thought and of expression. Oftentimes pressed beyond measure beneath his pastoral labors, he discovers himself more solicitous to find something to say each Sabbath, than what it is best to say, and how best to say it. His absence also, generally, from literary society, and from the benefit of intelligent criticism on his efforts, increases the tendency of which I have spoken. It has been said of some preachers, that the best sermons they ever delivered were those which they composed while students in theological seminaries. Now the habitual study of models will greatly aid the preacher to check

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this tendency to retrogression in his sermons, and to resist these adverse influences that environ him.

2. But a continual study of models will also tend to keep one improving in the literary character, and in the effectiveness of his discourses. No man ever rose high in any employment or profession, who had not a higher ideal before him. This is especially the case in that most difficult of all professions—the Christian ministry. There is so much in its varied and pressing duties to make one remiss in preparation for the pulpit, and so little of outward excitement, and clashing of opposing minds to nerve one up to high endeavor, that the preacher of all men needs a lofty ideal ever before him. By communing daily with the great masters of speech in secular and sacred literature, he both will gain some just conception of what a preacher should be, and will be constantly stimulated to effort to become such a preacher. But the question will arise,—How is a young pastor to find time for such study? The old answer may be given,—Where there is a will, there will generally be found a way. Let him carefully mark out for himself a method of studying these authors, and then firmly adhere to it, and he will be most agreeably surprised to find how much in this way he can achieve within the limits of a single year. For example, let him take one classic, and read a

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small part of it daily, until he shall have gone through and mastered it; then let him take another; and in this manner, without serious interruption in his regular studies and duties, he will greatly improve in the excellences of each of these models.

[1] See Robert Hall's method, Vol. IV., pp. 16 and 28; and Vol. III p. 30.

NOTE.

To the list on page 29 should also be added the following works: "The Christian Ministry at the Close of the Nineteenth Century," by Bishop A. N. Littlejohn; "Yale Lectures on Preaching," by Dr. N. J. Burton; "Evangelistic Work" and "The Divine Art of Preaching," by Dr. A. T. Pierson; "The Vocation of the Preacher," by Rev. E. Paxton Hood; "The Scottish Pulpit," by Dr. W. M. Taylor; "Lectures on the History of Preaching," by Dr. John Ker; "Colloquies on Preaching," by Canon Twells; "The History of Preaching," by Dr. J. A. Broadus; "The Preacher and his Models," by Dr. James Stalker; and "The Christian Ministry," by Prof. T. C. Pease.

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THE ANALYSIS OF A SERMON.

LECTURE III.

THE DEFINITION OF A SERMON—ITS PRINCIPAL PARTS—THE TEXT —ORIGIN OF THE USE OF TEXTS—OBJECTIONS TO THE USE OF TEXTS—USEFULNESS OF TEXTS IN PREACHING.

The Latin *sermo*—talk, conversation—in giving name to pulpit discourse, has intimated the informal character of the early sermon. Originally a familiar talk to the people on religious themes, it has by degrees become changed into the somewhat stately modern sermon.

The definitions of a sermon in its present form are well-nigh as many as are the writers on homiletics. Professor Phelps defines a sermon as follows: "The generic idea of a sermon is that of an oral address to the popular mind, on religious truth contained in the Scriptures, and elaborately treated with a view to persuasion."[1]

Professor Hoppin cites and adopts Vinet's definition: "The sermon is a discourse incorporated with public worship, and designed, concurrently or alternately, to conduct to Christian truth one who has not yet believed it, or to explain and apply it to those who admit it."[2]

A briefer and perhaps no less exact definition is the following: A sermon is a formal, popular discourse on a religious theme taken from Script-

[1] "The Theory of Preaching," p. 28. [2] "Homiletics," p. 12.

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ure, for the spiritual benefit of the hearer. Preaching represents both the act of uttering such a discourse, and the discourse itself.

Writers on both general and sacred rhetoric have not been at one in regard either to the principal parts of a discourse, or to the names by which they should be designated. Aristotle makes only two parts of an oration necessary to it—the statement and the proof—though afterward in concession to human infirmity, he admits four—exordium, statement, proof and peroration.[1] Cicero names six parts—exordium, narration, proposition, confirmation, refutation, and conclusion.[2] Writers on sacred rhetoric also differ as to the number and names of the main parts of a sacred discourse. Claude divides a sermon into five parts—exordium, connection, division, discussion, application.[3] Dr. Campbell makes a sermon to consist of five parts—introduction, exposition, partition of subject, discussion, and conclusion.[4] Dr. Porter also divides a sermon into five parts—exordium, exposition and proposition, division, discussion or argument, conclusion.[5] Vinet in like manner makes five divisions—exordium, explanation, subject, proof, peroration.[6] Prof. Ripley and Mr. Gresley

[1] Rhetoric, Book III., Chap. 13.
[2] Cicero de Oratore, L. II., C. 19.
[3] Vol. I., Chap. 1.
[4] "Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence," Lects. 8 and 9.
[5] Porter's Hom. Lec. 6.
[6] Vinet's Hom., Second Part.

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make substantially the same divisions as Dr. Porter. Prof. Shedd follows Aristotle, and makes four parts—introduction, proposition, proof, conclusion.[1] Dr. Fitch, whose excellent Lectures on Homiletics are not yet published, makes the parts of a sermon seven,—text, exordium, exposition, subject, division, discussion, peroration. You will notice that the peculiarity of this division lies in making the text a material part of a sermon. Vinet tells us that he "does not consider the employment of a text essential to the discourses from the pulpit. What makes a sermon Christian is not the employment of a text, but the spirit of the preacher. A sermon may be Christian, edifying, instructive, without confining itself within the limits of a passage of Holy Scripture. It may also be quite scriptural without having a text, just as, with a text, it may be by no means scriptural."[2]

Now to all this we willingly subscribe. But it by no means follows that the text may not be an important part of a sermon, though not essential to it. Indeed, were we to retain in a sermon only those parts which are essential to it, we must, with Aristotle, relentlessly throw out everything but the statement and the proof. For the introduction of a sermon, though an important part of it, is not an essential part. The sacred discourse could exist without an exordium. The same might also be said respecting the peroration of a sermon. It is

[1] Shedd's Hom., Chap. 8. [2] Vinet's Hom., p. 76.

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not necessary to a sermon, though quite important to its greatest efficiency. The cause of this denial to the text of its rightful place among the parts of a sermon seems to lie in not sufficiently discriminating between the sacred and the secular oration. While they have much in common, and agree in the essential parts of an oration—the proposition and the proof—they differ somewhat in the non-essential. The secular oration has no use for a text, and cannot properly have one. It has no thesaurus of divine and admitted truths to which it can go for a truth upon which to build itself. But the sacred oration has a vast repository of truths confessedly divine, to which it may resort, and upon any one of which it may securely rest. The sacred discourse is closely connected with some one of these truths,—so closely, indeed, that in the highest ideal of a sermon, the text and the sermon are one,—the sermon growing out of its text as truly as an oak out of its acorn. Those homiletic writers, who do not make the text a part of a sermon, are under the necessity of treating the text as a kind of excrescence on a sacred discourse, before they enter on an analysis and examination of a sermon itself. Now it seems as natural and proper to regard the text as a legitimate part of a sermon, as the introduction or the conclusion. Hence the text should be discussed in the analysis of a sermon, and not outside of it. I shall treat of the various parts of a sermon under the seven following di-

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visions,—text, introduction, exposition, subject, division, development, conclusion.

The Text.

In analyzing a sermon we come first to the text, so called from the Latin *textum*—that which is woven,—because in a true sermon the text is so interwoven with every part of the discourse as to be inseparable from it.

I. The origin of the practice of preaching from a text.

The custom of selecting a passage of the sacred Scriptures as a text for a sermon is very ancient. It is distinctly traceable, at least, as far back as to the method of worship in the Jewish synagogue. A part of the service consisted in reading, in course, lessons from both the Law and the Prophets, after which came the exposition or sermon, given either by the reader, or by one who might be invited. Sometimes the person was asked both to read and expound. Thus in Luke iv. 16, we learn that our Saviour on returning to the home of his boyhood, and entering its synagogue on the Sabbath, stood up to indicate his wish to read and explain the lesson of the day, taken from the Prophets. We find this custom prevailing in the service of the synagogue after our Lord's crucifixion, and used by the Apostles in their missionary tours as a means of making known the truths of the gospel. (Acts xiii. 15.) Hence,

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when the Jewish Christians separated from their brethren, and established their own meetings for worship, it was natural that this part of the service in the synagogue should pass over and become a part of worship in the Christian sanctuary. Thus we find in the earliest account which has come down to us,—as given by Justin Martyr—of religious services in Christian assemblies, that in the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles, it was the practice to remark or discourse on the part of the Scriptures read. A selection from the Old Testament, especially from the Prophetical writings, was first read, then a lesson from the Gospels, followed by one from the Epistles. The presiding officer of the church then gave to the assembly a short and familiar address, expounding and applying what had been read.[1] The address gradually became elaborate and formal to meet the requirements of advancing culture among the people, until it took the form of the modern sermon. At first the discourse was based on the lessons of the day, the Scriptures being divided into parts to correspond to the various feasts of the church, but since this was often found to be inconvenient, the preacher, at times, took the liberty to go outside of these passages to find an appropriate theme for his sermon, and thus arose the present practice.

[1] Justin Martyr's Second Apology to Antoninus Pius. Neander's Church History, Vol. I., p. 303. Guericke's Church History, Vol. I., p. 131. Kurtz's Church History, Vol. I., Sec. 34, p. 123.

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The former custom is still followed by some clergymen, though more generally the passage of Scripture is now made to conform to the text.

II. The objections to the employment of texts in preaching.

1. It is said to be puerile to expand into a sermon a thought contained in the few words of a text. "To speak long," says Voltaire, "upon a quotation of a line or two, to labor to bring one's whole discourse to bear upon this single line —such a labor appears a trifling little worthy the dignity of the ministry."[1] To this charge the following reply may be given.

(1.) The words of a text are not necessarily few. A text often includes many words, as in an expository sermon—a species of sacred discourse most nearly resembling the homilies of the early Christian church.

(2.) The few words of a text often contain a truth so important as to require a sermon of ordinary length to set it forth. Of this nature are very many of the truths of the Bible—truths which sweep around the entire horizon of man's being and relations, and which vitally concern him. Such truths, though expressed in fewest words, it is quite proper to expand into a sermon.

(3.) The objection, if valid, holds as well against the secular oration. The lawyer often speaks for

[1] Voltaire's Louis XIV. quoted from Vinet.

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hours on a legal question contained in a single sentence. The senator frequently pronounces a lengthy oration on a resolution embraced within a line or two.[1]

2. Again, it is objected that the making of a sermon from a text is not in good taste, because it violates classic usage. Such a form of oration was unknown to ancient orators, and hence the employment of it is not in good taste. But a discourse whose construction varies, in some particulars, from that of the model orations of antiquity, is not for this reason in bad taste: for,

(1.) There may be truths unknown to the ancient orators, which good taste requires to be set forth in a manner unknown to them. The orations of the ancient masters, though excellent models, are not perfect ones, and hence are not to be taken as unerring guides to the best development of every species of truth in every variety of circumstances. Were we to affirm the contrary, we must, to be consistent, maintain that the ancient orators had perfect knowledge of all truth and of all men, and of the best method of adapting the one to the other.

(2.) Let us now go one step further, and note that the Bible is full of truths unknown to the classic orators of antiquity. These truths are such as the human intellect could have never discovered

[1] Mr. Webster's reply to Gen. Hayne.

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—truths relating to the divine character and purposes, and to the future existence and state of man, which came to him by direct revelation from God and which for this reason he is to accept and act upon, and not because he has reached them through processes of reasoning. Now it may be an act most fitting, and therefore in best taste, to occupy an entire discourse in developing and enforcing a single truth of this nature—a truth so authoritative and vitally connected with one's eternal well-being. The ancient orators could not have produced a discourse like a modern sermon, for they did not have materials for it. They had no repository of moral truths of acknowledged divine authority to which they could resort for topics on which to discourse. Hence their orations were not, like a sermon, a development of an admitted truth—a setting forth of its far-reaching relations and consequences,—but usually attempts either to prove a statement to be true, as in an oration before a court, or to show a plan to be feasible, as in an oration before a deliberative body, or to eulogize another, as in an oration before an assembly of the people, corresponding respectively to what Aristotle has termed "the judicial, the deliberative, and the demonstrative oration," and not very unlike the judicial, deliberative, and political orations of the present day. Hence, to assert that a sacred discourse cannot

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be in good taste unless it be run in the same mold in which the secular orations have been cast—unless it have the same number of parts, and a similar development of those parts—is to affirm that all truth of whatever nature, which has been, or shall be revealed to our race throughout all time, can never be fittingly exhibited, unless it shall take the form of some one of the secular orations of the present day.

3. It is also asserted that the preaching only from texts restricts a minister to a limited range of topics. The preacher, it is said, should roam unrestricted through the entire realm of moral and religious truths, and without the impediments of texts, select such subjects as seem best adapted to the religious needs of his people and the great moral questions of the day. But the objection is based on a misconception of the range of Biblical truth. For the Bible was given by One who "knew what was in man," and who was able to supply his needs. It must, therefore, contain all those truths a knowledge of which is essential to man's highest well-being. Hence it must include either, (1.) texts which expressly relate to man in whatever state he may be; or, (2.) texts which do so by implication; or, (3.) texts which do so by suggestion. If, therefore, a subject that a preacher wishes to discourse upon cannot be found set forth in some passage of the Bible either expressly, or

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by implication, or by suggestion, then it is evident that he, as one commissioned to preach only the gospel, has no authority to discuss it in the pulpit.

4. The preaching from texts is alleged to be a departure from the primitive method. Our Saviour and his Apostles, it is claimed, did not practice this method. To this objection it may be answered,

(1.) That if this assertion could be sustained, it would not be a conclusive argument against the modern practice. For when the Saviour and his disciples began to preach, the sacred canon was imperfect. None of the New Testament Scriptures were in existence. These most important writings were yet to be added in order to complete the sacred volume, "that the man of God might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Hence it was a part of the mission of our Lord and his inspired followers to make known this part of divine truth. They were to communicate truths that were new, as well as to develop those that were old. Now the method of communicating a new truth of the sacred Scriptures must have differed necessarily from the present method of unfolding from a text one already known. For if the truth were a new one, it evidently could not have been evolved from any passage of the Scriptures then in existence. Hence no such passage could

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have been appropriately taken for a text. So far, therefore, as the discourses of our Saviour and his disciples were revelations, they could not have been models for a modern sermon. The preacher of the present day has no new truth to communicate. He has the Holy Scriptures in a completed state, and sufficient for all human needs—"profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness," and to them and them only, is he to resort for themes on which to discourse. It may also be replied,

(2.) That the assertion that the use of texts in preaching is at variance with the primitive method, cannot be fully sustained. Our Lord, we have reason to believe, often preached from a text. In the synagogue of Nazareth, he discoursed from a text taken from Isaiah lxi. 1. His sermon on the mount was largely an expository discourse on various passages of the Old Testament Scriptures. Philip preached to the eunuch from Isaiah liii. 7–8, and Paul's manner of preaching was largely expository and argumentative. He was wont to "reason from the Scriptures." This, it is quite probable, was the method employed by the Apostles whenever it was possible.

III. The usefulness of the method of preaching from a text.

Having looked at the main objections urged against the use of texts in preaching, let us now

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note particularly some of the benefits resulting from the present practice.

1. The preaching from a text gives divine authority to a theme. This is the chief reason for placing a passage of Scripture at the head of a discourse. Its theme becomes at once invested with a divine prerogative. It rests its claim to attention and regard not upon reasonings of men, but upon a declaration of God. Now, a divine announcement respecting any subject is fitted to call attention to it, and to give to it importance, how much more, when the subject itself is of infinite moment. Henceforth the theme stands forth robed in divine vestments, and men bow in its presence.

2. The method of preaching from a text promotes in hearers knowledge of the sacred Scriptures. Probably a large number of those who attend public worship on the Sabbath, derive most of their knowledge of the Bible from the instructions of the pulpit. This instruction is communicated chiefly through the exposition and development of the various passages of Scripture selected for texts. The number of such passages becomes quite considerable in an ordinary life-time. This is a strong argument in favor of expository preaching.

3. The method of preaching from a text promotes in hearers reverence for the sacred Scriptures. The audience see that the speaker does not presume to exalt his own, or any human sentiment to the place

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of honor in his discourse, but only a divine declaration, and the view tends to give them profound reverence for the sacred Word.

4. The employment of a text in preaching secures attention at the opening of a sermon. It is highly important to the success of a speaker, that he gain the attention of his audience in the beginning of his discourse. If at the outset he fail to awaken interest, he will afterward find it very difficult to secure it. Now, when a preacher rises to deliver a sermon, the knowledge on the part of his audience that he is to begin by announcing the text, excites curiosity, and awakens attention in all. They are ready and eager to learn on what particular topic they are to be addressed. The attention thus secured, can without much difficulty be retained.

5. The employment of a text in preaching aids hearers to remember both a theme and a discourse. If a sermon is a development of the divine germ in a text, a hearer who retains in memory the text, retains also the subject and the general course of thought in the discourse. They are substantially a unit, and the recollection of one part suggests the others. Now men more easily recall the text than any other part of a sermon. To a large number of hearers, the Bible is so familiar that a text from it is easily retained in memory, and the text suggests both the theme and the outline of the discourse.

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6. The preaching from a text tends to restrict a preacher to a religious discussion of whatever subject he selects. The great questions which constantly arise, tempt the preacher to drift away from the word of God in his treatment of themes, and to view them from a merely secular position. But the necessity laid upon him of placing a passage of Scripture at the head of his discourse, tends to lead him to select only such themes as can be legitimately drawn from the Bible, and in the discussion of them, to view them only from a religious stand-point.[1]

7. The method of preaching from a text promotes variety in sermons. It promotes variety (1.) in subjects. The great themes of the Christian system are far from numerous, and were a preacher to discourse on them in a philosophical and formal manner—as so many doctrines of a system—he would soon go over them all. But let him approach them as they lie scattered throughout the sacred Scriptures in concrete forms, as they shine out in sacred history and biography, and the number of shapes which they assume before him is well-nigh infinite. Each doctrine takes on a multitude of hues. Each passage containing a doctrine gives a new view of it, and suggests a fresh theme for a sermon. The doctrine of depravity, for ex-

[1] "A Character in Middlemarch," was the subject of a sermon announced not long since in Chicago papers by one of its ministers.

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ample, may have as many forms of presentation as there are texts which set it forth. The method promotes variety also (2.) in the treatment of subjects. The manner of developing a theme in a sermon naturally grows out of the manner in which it is set forth in the text. If the theme be expressed in figurative and glowing language, good taste requires that it have a very different unfolding from what it should have, when set forth in simple words. Hence each different form in which a truth is given in the Scriptures, should suggest in each case a different form of treatment.

8. The method of preaching from a text often furnishes, or suggests, an appropriate introduction to a theme. No exordiums are more appropriate or interesting than those which are sometimes gathered from materials given or suggested by texts themselves. A brief account of the occasion on which the text was uttered or written, of the speaker or writer, or an explanation of its meaning, often serves as an admirable introduction to the theme of a sermon.

Yet though the present practice of preaching from a text has many and great advantages, the question may arise, whether in some cases it may not be well to deviate from this method. It may be answered, that though occasionally a subject could be perhaps better treated without a text, yet since the present practice has become so well es-

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tablished, and is, as it were, a consecrated method in the estimation of the people, it is not well in any case to depart from it. A deviation from the custom would be likely so to prejudice hearers, that more evil than good would result from the change.

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LECTURE IV.

THE TEXT—ABUSES—AUTHORITY.

Having noticed the various uses to which texts may be properly put, we come now to note:

IV. The abuse of texts.

Passages of the sacred Scripture selected for texts may be abused in a great variety of ways. Let us note those the most common.

1. A text may be abused by perverting its meaning. This perversion often results:

(1.) From inattention to the context. A text has been not inaptly represented as a soul of which the context is the body, and as a knowledge of the spirit is gained by means of the body which invests it, so frequently the right apprehension of the meaning of a text can be gained only through a knowledge of its surroundings.

(2.) From interpreting figurative language literally. The Bible abounds in figurative expressions. It was written among a poetic people—a nation that delighted in figures of speech. Indeed,

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much of it is written in a poetic form. Many of its composers were men of ordinary education, not accustomed to abstruse speculations, or to precise philosophical statements. They wrote as they talked, conveying inspired truths in the language and forms of speech prevalent among the masses in their age and nation. Hence nothing could be more unjust to these authors, or more at variance with the true teaching of the inspired word, than to take their figurative expressions in a literal sense. Each of these expressions has, at bottom, a truth upon which it rests, and it is the duty of him who is called to minister in sacred things, to reach this truth by a careful and searching exegesis, before he presumes to build a discourse upon it for the instruction of others. Take a single illlustration under this head. A preacher selects a passage like the following—Ps. lviii. 3, "They" (the wicked) "go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies," and deduces from it, as the subject of his discourse, the proposition that all the human race are actual sinners from birth. Now who cannot see that the sacred poet in describing the corruption of the natural man, employs here the strong, figurative and graphic language of poetry, intending by it vividly to set forth the great truth of the innate corruption of our entire race—their utter destitution of holiness, and positive inclination to wrong doing—so that each individual of the race will commit actual

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sin as soon as he can? Evidently nothing could have been farther from the poet's intention than to point out the instant in which each individual of the human family commits actual sin. If it be maintained that this is the intention of the sacred writer, then consistency requires that a literal signification be given to all the words of the passage, which will make them utter nonsense.

(3.) From interpreting literal language figuratively. A perversion of the meaning of a text resulting from this error is less common than from the opposite, but it is not unknown. There are Christian sects which rest their belief on such an interpretation of important passages of Scripture, and whose pulpits uniformly teach doctrines obtained by this method of exegesis.

(4.) A perversion of the meaning of a text also results from a fanciful accommodation. Passages of Scripture often convey truths to us not expressly, nor impliedly, but by suggestion—through some resemblance or analogy of the thought to the sentiment suggested by it. Whenever a passage is thus employed as a text for a theme which it suggests, it is said to be used by accommodation. It is an allowable, and often a convenient method of employing a text, but great care should be taken to see that the subject of the discourse is consonant with the sentiment of the text. But when a text is forced from its meaning, and com-

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pelled to introduce a theme merely because of some resemblance to it in words, or by reason of some fanciful suggestion caused by a word, the accommodation is unwarranted, and is termed a "forced accommodation." A good example of this species of perversion of texts is given by Fénelon in his "Dialogues," in the case of a preacher, who took for the text of his discourse on Ash-Wednesday, Ps. cii. 9, "I have eaten ashes like bread"—a passage which would have never been selected for a text on such an occasion, had it not contained a word that bore some resemblance to the name of the day. A distinguished clergyman of my acquaintance, who was called to preach a sermon at the ordination of a young man whose Christian name was John, took as his text, John i. 6, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." This passage was evidently selected for the text, not because of any special relevancy of the thought it contained to the occasion, but chiefly because it happened to include the proper name of the candidate. A few years ago, a clergyman preached in Boston on "The duty of cultivating flowers," taking as his text, John xviii. 1, "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples." Surely nothing could have been further from the mind of the Apostle in

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giving this simple narrative, than the thought of urging the duty of cultivating flowers, and the sentiment could not by any amount of pressure be gotten from this text, but rests only on the ground that the word "garden" suggests flowers. A far more appropriate text, though very remotely suggesting the theme, was that chosen by an old minister who preached at an early day in the central part of Illinois. Having passed many years of blissful quiet, before the various reforms and isms of the day had invaded that region, he became, at length, so annoyed by their spreading among his people, and by the excitement which the continual discussion of them produced, that, unable longer to restrain himself, he found relief in preaching from the text, Ps. cxix. 83, "I am become like a bottle in the smoke." Dean Swift is said to have preached the annual sermon to the Associated Tailors of Dublin on the text: "A remnant shall be saved."

A perversion of the meaning of a text may also come:

(5.) From an exclusion of parts necessary to the correct sense. By such a process the word of God can be made to teach any doctrine however absurd, even atheism itself. But every thought of God contained in his Holy Scriptures, when made the subject of a sermon, justly claims the full expression which he has given to it, and a preacher

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has no more right either to take from it, or to add to it, than he has to take the same liberty with the Book itself. He may, indeed, at times—and it is often the best method—select from a long passage, a brief sentence that sums up and contains the thought, or he may take a short isolated sentence, if it contain a sentiment in harmony with the context, but in every instance he should see that the thought in the passage from which the text is taken, has its just and proper expression. Examples of this sort of abuse of texts are not infrequently furnished by those who ought to know better. A mutilation of a passage has sometimes been carried so far as to give the remnants a ridiculous meaning. A Pedobaptist minister, who had a zeal against his Baptist brethren not according to knowledge, once preached from the text, Proverbs xx. 23, "Divers (weights) are an abomination unto the Lord."

2. A text may be abused by unduly extending its meaning. In this way there is given to a passage a latitude of signification which the sacred writer could not have intended. This is most frequently done in what is sometimes termed the exhaustive method of speaking. It consists in a sort of philosophical development of the several parts of a theme, and in a setting forth of its manifold relations to other truths. It approaches somewhat nearly to what Theremin terms the "statuesque"

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method of development. Now since each truth of the sacred Scriptures has certain relations to every other truth, and to every condition of man, it is manifest that a preacher who adopts this method may discourse at any length on any one of the themes of the Scriptures. For example, let us suppose him to discourse on one of the plainest injunctions of the gospel—the command to all men everywhere to repent. (Acts xvii. 30.) Now, instead of urging at once upon his hearers the duty of immediate repentance, the preacher might go on to analyze repentance, and to discuss its various elements, and its evidences, and fruits, and then might proceed to dilate on its relations to other truths—as for instance, showing that repentance implies sin, and sin implies a moral agent, and a moral agent implies one possessing intelligence and freedom of will,—and thus he might go on implying, until he should drag into his sermon all the great truths relating both to God and to man. A method of preaching not altogether unlike this was prevalent two centuries ago. John Howe has fourteen sermons on the six words, "For we are saved by hope," and twelve on the text, 1 John v. 1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." What now, is the doctrine evidently designed to be set forth by the Apostle in this passage? Simply this,—that practical belief in Jesus as Saviour is evidence of having been born again.

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An examination somewhat in detail of the manner in which Howe discusses this text, and of the amount of matter which he manages to get out of it, or rather into it, would give us a correct idea of a method of preaching quite common in his time.[1] Such were the sermons of a man whom Cromwell so highly esteemed that he made him his domestic chaplain. After reading these sermons, we cannot wonder that the man who could stand them, could stand any forces which could be brought into the field against him. This method of preaching was not wholly confined to the seventeenth century. An eminent scholar of our day is said to have preached seven sermons on the word "Selah."

3. Not infrequently a text may be abused by being made to recall improper associations. The Scriptures, though the purest of all writings in sentiment, and, at the time when they were composed, as well as when they were translated into the English tongue, as pure as any in language, yet have from age to age suffered most from low wit, so that many of their expressions have become associated in the minds of not a few, with vulgar thoughts and improper phrases. A passage of this kind, a preacher should rarely select for a text, though he should not hesitate to read such passages when they occur in his public readings of the Scriptures.

[1] Howe's Complete Works, Vol. I., p. 882.

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He cannot be too carefully on his guard lest he destroy the force of a truth by suffering it to become attached to some ludicrous or vulgar association. In such case neither genius nor eloquence will enable him to efface the association he has permitted to come into being, and which will in great measure destroy the impression he has sought to make on his hearers. Take, for example, the part of the simple narrative of Paul's shipwreck recorded in Acts xxvii. 15. "And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive," the latter clause of which,—"Let her drive,"—during a financial storm that swept over the country, was taken by a well-known preacher as a text for a discourse on the duty of giving over our secular affairs wholly to divine guidance, when we have done for ourselves the best we are able to do. Now aside from the remoteness of the thought in the text to the theme of the sermon, it is questionable, to say the least, whether the impressions which would have been produced by a discussion of the theme, had it been from another text, were not in great measure destroyed by reason of the low association which it recalled in the minds of the audience. Such an association of ideas could have been easily prevented by taking the entire verse for the text, instead of the clause likely to be abused.

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V. The authority of texts.

Different parts of the sacred writings come to us, clothed with different degrees of authority. These are,

1. Passages whose divine authority is unquestioned by all who receive the Bible as the word of God. They form the greatest part of the sacred writings.

2. Passages whose divine authority is doubtful. Such are the passages regarded by many as interpolations, as, for example, parts of the verses 7–8 in 1 John, chap. v. (Authorized Version), "There are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth,] the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." The words inclosed in brackets are regarded by all our best Biblical critics as spurious, and are left out of the Revised Version.

3. Passages which are admitted to be of human authority only. They include:

(1.) Passages expressing only the sentiments of uninspired good men—sentiments both correct and incorrect,—as the expressions of Job's friends.

(2.) Passages containing only the sentiments of bad men—sentiments both correct and incorrect. For example; the expression of Judas, "I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood," (Matt

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xxvii. 4,) and that of the barbarous people of Melita respecting Paul, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped from the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live." (Acts xxviii. 4.)

Since, then, different parts of the sacred writings come to us with unequal degrees of authority, two inquiries regarding them become important to a preacher: To what extent, and in what manner may he use as texts those passages of the Scriptures which are acknowledged to embody uninspired sentiments? As respects the first inquiry—the extent to which he may employ them—let it be replied:

1. He may discourse on all those passages of the Scriptures which, though containing uninspired sentiments, are acknowledged to form a part of the sacred record. The distinction between an inspired thought and an inspired record of a thought, ought ever to be kept in view. The record of a sentiment may be inspired, while the sentiment itself is not. For example, the record of what Job's friends said is an inspired record, but their sentiments are not inspired. Now, from what we know of the divine economy, we may justly infer that there has been put in the sacred record nothing which does not conduce in some way to man's salvation. It is not the manner of God to be wasteful in the expenditure of his resources. We have good reason to believe that he never

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expends either in his kingdom of nature or of grace, more than is necessary to accomplish the end in view. Hence, it is reasonable to believe that every part of the inspired record is of use to man. But we have it on the highest authority that "every scripture inspired of God"—whether the inspiration extend beyond the record or not, —"is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. iii. 16–17.) A preacher, therefore, may discourse on every part of this Scripture with profit to his hearers. But as regards those parts of the Bible respecting which there is a fair doubt whether or not they form a part of the original Scriptures, the following answer must be given.

2. A preacher should not discourse on those parts of the Bible respecting whose genuineness there exists a reasonable doubt. For (1.) he will thus be liable to discourse on passages forming no part of the word of God. He will not be sure that he is not preaching to the people the mere words of man instead of the words of eternal life. Moreover (2.) he will be liable to teach error; and (3.) he will also be liable to the distrust of his hearers. Some in his audience will doubtless know that the passage on which he founds his discourse is reasonably regarded as spurious, and if he do

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not announce this fact to them, they will be apt to become suspicious that he is not dealing fairly either with his audience, or with the divine word. On the other hand, should he mention that the passage on which he is to discourse, is of doubtful authority, the announcement will render his sermon well nigh impotent. Hence it is wise in a preacher to abstain wholly from discoursing on passages of the Bible whose genuineness can fairly be called in question. If a passage of this kind contain a sentiment to be found elsewhere in the Bible, it is better to select such other passage as a text, and if the sentiment be not found in other parts of the Bible, taught either expressly or impliedly, this fact is pretty good evidence that the passage containing the thought is spurious, and hence should not be taken to furnish a theme for a sermon.

We come, then, to consider the second inquiry —In what manner may a preacher use as texts those passages of the Scriptures which are acknowledged to embody uninspired sentiments? The inquiry has reference only to employing as texts passages, which, though admitted to form a part of the inspired record, are of merely human authority, for if there be a reasonable doubt respecting their genuineness, it has been shown that a preacher ought to reject them altogether.

1. Evidently a preacher should not discourse

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on such passages as if the sentiments they contain are inspired. Hence he ought not to use them as texts on which to build the proof of a doctrine. They may be employed in doctrinal discourses collaterally with other passages, to illustrate and enforce a doctrine developed from an inspired sentiment, but should not form the basis of such a discourse.

2. A preacher may discourse on such passages in a great variety of ways. The following may be noted.

He may employ many of them (1.) as vivid illustrations of the character of God. For example, where else in the whole Bible are to be found more graphic representations of the awful majesty and omnipotence of God, than are given in some of the expressions of Job's friends?

He may also employ many of them (2.) as vivid illustrations of the character of the works of God. See, also, as examples, many of the utterances of the friends of Job.

He may also use many of them (3.) as vivid illustrations of the imperfections of good men. See, for example, the passage which records the equivocation of Abraham to Abimelech respecting his relationship to Sarah (Gen. xx.), and that which contains the worse equivocation of Isaac respecting his relationship to Rebekah (Gen. xxvi.), as also that which records the deceit practiced by Rebekah

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and Jacob on Isaac in order to wrest from Esau the birthright blessing (Gen. xxvii.).

He may make use of many of them also (4.) as vivid illustrations of the character of bad men. See, for example, the record of the oath taken by the more than forty conspirators against the life of the Apostle Paul. "We have bound ourselves under a great curse to taste nothing until we have killed Paul" (Acts xxiii. 14).

And he may employ many of them (5.) as vivid illustrations of the power of conscience in bad men. Take, for example, the confession of Judas—"I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. xxvii. 4).

These are only a few of the many ways in which a preacher may use as texts those parts of the sacred Scriptures which contain uninspired sentiments.

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LECTURE V.

THE TEXT—DESIRABLE QUALITIES.

In the numerous passages of Scripture teaching essentially the same truth, there are some which, by reason of certain qualities, are better adapted than others for texts. We come, then, to notice:

VI. The desirable qualities in texts.

1. The most important quality in a text is pertinency; for if a text do not pertain to the subject of a sermon, though it have all other desirable qualities, it is valueless. But we now assume that the passages from which a preacher is to select a text, have, each, such a relation to his general theme, as to render it proper for him to take any of them for the text. If a passage has no such relation to the subject of his discourse, then the employment of it is an abuse of it, which has been already treated of under another head. Hence I am now to speak simply of the degree of pertinency desirable in a text. It is desirable, then,

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(1.) That a text set forth a theme explicitly. For, (*a.*) an express statement of a subject in a text gives the highest authority to a theme. A clear declaration of the Deity—a "Thus saith the Lord"—imparts to a sentiment an authority with men which one less clearly a divine revelation, cannot have.

(*b.*) An explicit statement of a subject in a text gives authority to a preacher. He does not stand in the pulpit to develop and enforce a sentiment of his own—to be believed and obeyed simply on his own authority or reasoning,—but a truth clearly from God, which he has been commissioned to present to his hearers for instant acceptance and obedience. Such a text evidently must clothe a preacher with an authority he cannot have in discoursing on a theme connected with a text only by suggestion.

(*c.*) A clear announcement of a subject in a text gives power to a discourse. The theme thus becomes clothed with highest authority, the preacher also is robed with it, and hence the discourse itself —which is only a development and application of the theme—must have more power over an audience than a sermon of equal ability, but developed from a text only indirectly, or by suggestion. It may be added:

(*d.*) A declaration of a subject in a text aids a hearer to remember the theme and the sermon.

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The text suggests the subject, and the subject the text, and the two thus closely united, are more easily remembered than if the theme were isolated in the memory.

(2.) Exceptions. Although a text clearly teaching a theme has many advantages, yet it is often expedient and even necessary to choose a text from which the theme can be gotten only by implication, or by suggestion. For the Bible is not a statute-book, containing specific laws framed to meet sin in every form in which it presents itself in a human life, but a book of great moral principles, out of which alone can spring all forms of correct moral action. It neither stops nor stoops to give man numberless minute directions as to the manner in which he is to act in the various relations of life. Such an attempt would be as useless as impossible. But it speaks to man as a being endowed with reason and conscience, and able to deduce from a few great principles, rules applicable to every phase of human action. These few principles are set forth and illustrated through the forms of history, biography, and parable on every page of the sacred word. The preacher is so to study these great truths of the word of God through all the forms in which they are presented, as to gain a clear conception of their meaning and extent, and then to apply their logical results faithfully and fearlessly to all forms of human activity

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He must not wait and be silent until he can find an express command of God against some form of social or individual wrong lifting itself before him. It must be enough for him, if it contravenes the principle of loving one's neighbor as one's self. He must then speak, and apply the principle with the same directness with which he would enforce an express command of God made with reference to that particular action. This species of preaching will form no inconsiderable part of the pulpit ministrations of a faithful preacher. While he is chiefly to dwell on the great themes of the gospel which have to do with the relation of the individual soul to God, he is not to ignore, or to fail to expound and apply faithfully the principles of the divine word which have reference to man in all his relations to man. But such preaching will often compel a preacher to take a text setting forth a principle from which his theme is only a logical deduction.

There will also be in the ministry of every preacher, occasions which seem to demand the discussion of a theme not found taught either expressly, or by logical deduction, in the Scriptures, but for which a text may be found containing a thought which has some direct or analogical resemblance to the sentiment of the theme. A text thus employed is said to be used by accommodation. With regard to passages thus used, I remark:—

(*a.*) A text should not generally be used by ac-

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commodation to introduce a theme which is to be found contained either expressly or impliedly in another passage of the Scriptures. The rule usually to be observed, is:—Find a text as pertinent to a theme as possible. For the more directly a sermon grows out of a divine germ, the more powerful it becomes. Nor will it often be necessary to employ a text by accommodation. As a preacher increases in knowledge of the Bible, he finds it more fruitful in themes for sermons, and he finds it less needful to use texts by accommodation. To one who has an earnest heart, and a suggestive mind, abundant themes for sermons spring forth from the Scriptures, so that he is rarely in want either of a suitable theme, or of a text appropriate to it.

(*b.*) The accommodation of a text should be natural. It should not be fanciful and strained, but founded on some direct or analogical resemblance. See, for examples of a proper accommodation of a text, Dr. Chalmers' sermon preached before the "Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge," from the text, John i. 46, "And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."[1] Also Dr. Bushnell's sermon entitled "Christ waiting to find Room," text, Luke ii. 7, "And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swad

[1] Chalmers' Works, Carter's Ed., Vol. IV.

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ling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."[1]

(*c.*) A preacher using a text by accommodation, should indicate this fact to his audience. Such an announcement is due alike to his hearers and the word of God.

2. Perspicuity. This quality of a text includes perspicuity in language, in construction, and in thought. Let us notice each.

(1.) Perspicuity in language. It is desirable that a text set forth a thought in words whose meaning is familiar to the hearers. In this respect it is fortunately difficult for a preacher to err in selecting a text for any subject. The language of our English Bible is largely made up of Anglo-Saxon words which convey, at once, their meaning to the masses. But the words, though familiar, often contain allusions and imagery which render the sense obscure.

(2.) Perspicuity in construction. Perspicuity of construction requires (*a.*) that a text form a sentence containing complete sense. It should have a subject, a copula, and a predicate,—as, "God is love,"—or their equivalents—as, "Jesus wept." Hence the rule forbids the selection of a single word for a text, as "Selah," "Amen," or a phrase which standing by itself does not convey, or suggest a definite proposition. The phrase, however, need

[1] "Christ and his Salvation," Ser. I.

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not be in the form of a proposition—either logical or rhetorical—but it should at once bring the proposition to mind, and it should be taken in the sense which it has in the passage to which it belongs. Thus Robert Hall's great sermon on "Modern Infidelity"[1] is founded on the text, Eph. ii. 12, "Without God in the world." The entire verse reads—"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Here the phrase which forms the text, when detached, conveys the same meaning as when it stands in the verse, while by its isolation, it makes the truth it contains, more impressive. Dr. Chalmers has a sermon on the "Universality of the Gospel Offer"[2] from the text "Good will toward men," Luke ii. 14, last clause. The entire passage is—"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men." The same author has also a discourse on "Christ, the wisdom of God,"[3] from 1 Cor. i. 24, by forming, from two parts of the verse, the phrase —"Christ—the wisdom of God." The whole verse reads—"But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God,

[1] Vol. I., Ser. 1. [2] Vol. III., Ser. 30. [3] Vol. IV., Ser. 8.

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and the wisdom of God." It is not generally well thus to make up a text out of the fragments of a passage, but if it is to be done, great care should be taken that the parts, when put together, may convey the same meaning as when they stand in the verse.

Perspicuity in construction also requires (*b.*) that a text be not complicated in structure. It is desirable that a text have so simple a construction as to allow the mind of a hearer to give itself at once, without effort, or distraction, wholly to the sentiment.

(3.) Perspicuity in thought. If a text contain a thought at once apprehended by those to whom the discourse is addressed, they are ready without delay to accompany the preacher as he proceeds to develop and apply it. He is not obliged to linger about the text, and in explaining it, consume time needed in other parts of the discourse. Indeed, this is the chief objection against the use of obscure texts—that the necessary explanation of them consumes time needed in other parts of the sermon. Yet perspicuous passages of Scripture should not always be chosen for texts, since obscure texts are not without advantages. Let some of these be noted:

(4.) Exception. The use of an obscure text (*a.*) promotes in hearers knowledge of the Scriptures. Many of those who attend public wor-

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ship, obtain much of their knowledge of the word of God, from the instructions of the pulpit. Hence it becomes very important that a preacher often expound to his people difficult passages of the Bible. If he always shun them, and select only perspicuous passages for texts—only "bringing forth out of his treasure things old," he will find that he is dwarfing his hearers by not building them up by "every word that proceedeth out of the word of God." A wise minister will often preach expository sermons. An obscure text (*b.*) draws attention to the thoughts which it contains. It excites the interest and curiosity of an audience to ascertain what sentiments the preacher is to deduce from it. In explaining the meaning of the text, the preacher compels his hearers to dwell on the thought contained in it. An obscure text (*c.*) often furnishes an appropriate introduction to a theme. The explanation of a difficult text is in itself frequently the best introduction to the subject taken from it. The employment of obscure texts (*d.*) furnishes a variety of texts for a theme. This is no small advantage to a preacher. Discoursing from year to year chiefly on a few themes of the gospel, he is often compelled to tax his ingenuity to the utmost to give freshness and interest to his treatment of these subjects. But he will find himself greatly aided in his efforts, if he will occasionally

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approach these themes through unusual and difficult texts, which, while teaching them, present them in new and attractive forms. He should, however, be on his guard, lest in his effort to impart freshness and interest to his discourses in this way, he gain novelty at the loss of propriety.

3. Simplicity. This quality differs somewhat from perspicuity. Simplicity presupposes perspicuity, but perspicuity does not necessarily include simplicity. The meaning of a text may be at once evident, while the text itself may be far from simple in its form of expressing such meaning. The quality approaches somewhat nearly to what might be termed modesty of style, denoting the absence of whatever seems showy in expression. Such was pre-eminently our Saviour's style, which, though highly figurative, and abounding in illustrations, was as simple as a child's. The Bible, it should be remembered, was written by men of the most diverse gifts, and natural character. Many of them lived ages apart, and composed their several parts of the sacred writings in circumstances as different from each other as can well be imagined. Some were mighty warriors, and pressed a throne, others composed when hunted in a wilderness, or chained to a soldier. No small part of their writings is in the glowing language and imagery of Hebrew poetry. Hence, as a result of this great diversity in the character

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and circumstances of the sacred writers, we have proceeding from them while under the guidance of the Divine Spirit—who allowed each to say what he had to say, in his own way—the most diverse forms of expression, designed to set forth the same truth. At one time, we meet with a statement of a truth as direct and naked as a proposition in geometry, at another, with an expression of the same truth as majestic and sublime as human language can make it. Now it is evident that all of these forms of setting forth the same truth are not equally adapted to the purpose of a preacher. Although each of them is doubtless the best form of expression for the place in which it stands, yet it by no means follows, that when taken out of its place, and made to stand in isolation at the head of a sermon to furnish a theme, it is the best form for announcing such theme. The place, perhaps, in which it stands requires that the thought be expressed in highly figurative and impassioned language—a form of statement which would be wholly unsuited to stand at the head of a calm, doctrinal discourse. Let, then, the following points be noted.

(1.) The rhetorical character of a text should always correspond to that of the discourse. For,

(*a.*) Good taste demands it. If a sermon is to be highly figurative—is to abound in glowing imagery,—correct taste evidently requires that the

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text which is to furnish the theme, have itself a similar form. But if the sermon is to be a calm discussion of a doctrine, how inappropriate must it evidently be to select a highly figurative and impassioned text! For example, suppose a preacher wishes to discourse on the faithfulness of God in rescuing his people in time of trouble. He might take either of the following texts,—Ps. xxxiv. 17, "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles": or Ps. xviii. 9–16, "He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea he did fly upon the wings of the wind. . . . He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters." But who cannot see that these two passages, though conveying essentially the same truth, ought to produce two sermons the opposites of each other in rhetorical structure? Again, suppose a preacher desires to show from the Old Testament, that Christ, after his mediatorial work on earth is to ascend to his mediatorial reign in heaven. He might take for the text, Ps. cx. 1, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool"; or Ps. lxviii. 18, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them"; or by a fair accommo

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dation, he might take the sublime passage found in Ps. xxiv. 7, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Now it is evident that each of these passages ought to develop into sermons wholly unlike in rhetorical character.

(*b.*) The proper object of a discourse demands it. The aim of a preacher should always be to produce an act on the part of his hearers,—not necessarily an external act, but an act of the soul —a volition which may, or may not, be visible in the outward life. (In this respect an oration differs from an essay. The design of an essay ends in a judgment, of an oration, in an act.) But every volition must be preceded by knowledge. Hence the way by which to lead a man to act in view of any truth, is first to inform his understanding respecting it, so that out of his intelligent conception of the truth, you may call forth his emotion in view of it, and out of that emotion you may elicit an act of the will. Now suppose a preacher attempts to reverse this natural order of the production of action in his hearers, and comes down upon them when they are in the calmest condition possible, with a torrent of emotion,—or of the language which is its proper vehicle—and how utterly must he fail to produce anything in his audience but disgust. But there are occasions when an audience is found in a highly emotional condition, and a

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preacher may then properly use an impassioned and highly figurative text.

(2.) Simplicity in expression should generally be a characteristic of texts. For,

(*a.*) Audiences are usually devoid of strong emotion at the beginning of a discourse. Hence, in accordance with the rule just now stated, a text should be chosen whose rhetorical character is adapted to this calm condition of hearers.

(*b.*) A simple text aids a preacher to satisfy more generally the expectation of his hearers. If he announce a text expressing strong emotion in highly figurative terms, he will excite in his audience high anticipations respecting his sermon, which it will ordinarily be exceedingly difficult for him to fulfill. His text promises a brilliant effort, and his production will be relentlessly contrasted with the ideal which he has called into being. If it do not approach somewhat nearly to this standard, the audience will be disappointed, and the discourse will have little effect. Hence, it is well for a preacher, from regard both to his hearers and to himself, to observe the Horatian maxim, and see to it that he does not give "smoke from flash, but from smoke, light," else he may furnish another illustration of the poet's line,

"Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus." [1]

But the rule which has been laid down respecting

[1] "Ars Poetica," line 139.

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simplicity in texts, though general, is not universal. It is well, perhaps, for a preacher to take occasionally a text which promises a great effort, for the very purpose of stimulating himself to high endeavor. Knowing that he will thus excite great expectations, he is girded up by this thought to earnest effort to do justice to his subject. There will also be occasions which demand a text full of emotion,—a text expressing great sorrow or joy in impassioned language. At such times, when waves of emotion are sweeping over an audience, it is prepared, at once, to accept the strongest language in which deep feeling can express itself. Then, a preacher whose heart beats in sympathy with his hearers, may fearlessly take for a text, the most vivid representations to be found in Scripture of the emotion which pervades his audience. The deep feeling by which he is swayed, will gird him to high effort to master his theme. Such an occasion was that, when in our land the great civil conflict ended in a day. Every loyal pulpit gave exultant utterance to a nation's joy. And when, within one short week, the nation was plunged from those heights of joy into profoundest grief, what inspired words could be found too strong to set forth the emotion that surged over the public mind?

4. Precision. It is desirable that a text be exactly limited by a theme, so as to cover only

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the same extent. If a subject embrace a wider range of thought than its text, then the sermon —which is simply a development of the subject,— will not wholly grow out of the text; and if the theme have a narrower range of thought than its text, then the discourse, while it may be a development of all the thought in its theme, is a development of only a part of the thought of its text. In the latter case, there is a margin of the text, more or less wide, which is not only of no use, but an injury, because it tends to draw attention from the thought which is made the subject of the sermon. But important as is precision in a text, it is not always easily obtained. As the division of the Bible into chapters and verses is frequently arbitrary,—having little reference to the natural divisions of the thought,—it is often difficult to find a passage covering precisely the theme which you wish to treat. When this cannot be done, and a redundant passage must be taken, it is well, after reading the entire verse or verses, to announce as the text, that part of the passage which sets forth the theme; or you may take the reverse method, first reading only that part of the passage which contains the subject, and then reading the whole passage in its order.

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LECTURE VI.

THE INTRODUCTION—DESIGN—IMPORTANCE—MATERIALS.

I. In entering upon a discussion of the introduction to a sermon, the first thing which engages our attention is its design.

The etymology of the terms employed to designate this part of a discourse, indicates the object of an introduction. We have, first, the Greek term, προοίμιον, from πρό, and οἶμος, literally, before a way or road, or, before the course of a song—ἀοιδῆς. Then we have the Latin term, *exordium*, from *exordior*,—to begin a web, to lay the warp,—as also the Latin term, *introductio*—from *intro* and *ducere*—to lead in. Here we find running through these several terms, the idea of a preparation for that which is to follow. The terms are figurative,—one implying that there is something in the road on which we are about to set out, that needs to be removed; another representing the act of beginning a web, and making the necessary preparations to start the shuttle; while a

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third would lead us forward to a personal acquaintance with that which is to be presented. In accordance with the etymological meaning of these terms, the ancient rhetoricians and orators taught that the design of an introduction is to prepare an audience for that which is to follow. Aristotle, as before observed, maintains that the exordium is not an essential part of an oration, yet he states that when employed, "The most necessary business of the exordium, and this is peculiar to it, is to throw some light on the end for the sake of which the speech is made."[1] Quintilian, next to Aristotle, the ablest rhetorician of antiquity, says, "The beginning of a speech has no other design than to prepare the hearer to be well disposed in the other parts of the discourse. . . . . Its object is to render him benevolent, attentive, docile."[2] These instructions of the ancient masters of speech, have reference, you perceive, to the exordium of a secular oration. They had no conception of a modern sacred oration,—a sermon,—and hence could give no specific instructions for this species of discourse. Yet an introduction to a sacred discourse has the same general design as an introduction to a secular oration, and should be made to conform to the same general rules. The design, then, of an introduction to a sermon, is to dispose

[1] Aristotle, Rhetoric, Book III chap. 14,
[2] "De Institutione Oratoria." L. IV., c. 1.

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the audience to listen with attention and favor to the discourse. It is assumed that hearers are not usually in a condition to enter, at once, on the discussion of a theme, that they need to be prepared in some sort for it—to be conducted into the same circle of ideas with the discourse,—to be put, if I may so say, into electrical connection with the thought of the sermon, so that the current of thought and feeling shall flow uninterruptedly alike through speaker and hearer.

II. The importance of the introduction to a sermon will appear from two considerations:

1. An introduction to a sermon is required by a law of the human mind. We are so made that we do not at once enter naturally and easily on the discussion of a topic new to us. We must approach it gradually and gently, or we feel a shock; and if we are hurled into it, we experience, as Claude says, something of the sensation which Habakkuk may be supposed to have felt, when the angel took him by the hair of his head, and transported him in an instant from Judea to Babylon.[1] In conversation we instinctively recognize, and conform to this law of mind, and the more grave and important the subject which we introduce in conversation, the more carefully do we observe the law, and he who should disregard it would make himself both uninteresting and im-

[1] Claude's Essay, Vol. II., p. 455.

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potent in society. And the law nolds as well, when one speaks to a large as to a small number. Time must be given for the mind to approach the subject without hurry or constraint, and the avenue to it must be made pleasant.

2. An introduction to a sermon is required by the condition in which an audience met for public worship on the Sabbath is usually found. For,

(1.) Most of an audience come together with minds unoccupied with any religious subject. They have no definite theme on which they have been thinking, and which has taken possession of them. They may have spent, perhaps, part of the time previous to the hour of service, in religious reading, but it has been with no definite aim, and has rather blunted, than aroused and quickened their religious sensibilities. Hence the hearers have come together with no great thoughts exciting their minds, calling forth their emotions, and preparing them to enter, at once, with the preacher on some great theme of the gospel. He finds his audience devoid alike of earnest religious thought and emotion. Thought and feeling in them are like stagnant waters which he must set to flowing in one direction, if he would gain his object. This he must accomplish mainly in the introduction.

(2.) The thoughtful few of an audience come together with minds occupied with different subjects of thought. These topics are, perhaps, al-

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most as numerous as those who are thinking on them. If now, a preacher select for his theme one of these topics, he has only one or two of these thoughtful hearers prepared to accompany him in its discussion. He finds all but one or two of them following courses of thought at variance with the channel in which his own thoughts are flowing. He must, therefore, tap these rills of thought, and cause them all to flow into the one broad channel which he has prepared for them. This is to be achieved in the introduction.

(3.) Some of an audience are usually without especial interest in the preacher. They may not, indeed, have toward him unkind feeling, but they are rather in a neutral condition—a condition of indifference. So long as this want of interest is felt towards him, he can exert little power over his hearers. His arguments however cogent, and appeals however pathetic, will fall powerless on such listeners. He must, then, address himself to the removal of this indifference felt towards himself. He should endeavor to bring all of his hearers into such a condition of good will to himself, as will lead them to listen with favor to whatever he may bring before them—to follow him into whatever subject he may choose to enter. This result is to be attained in the introduction.

(4.) Some of an audience are generally not eager to be instructed by the preacher. They can-

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not be said to be in a teachable frame of mind. If they come to the house of God with any prevailing desire, it is rather a desire to be pleased, than to be instructed in the way of life. They do not realize their ignorance of divine things, and hence, do not feel their need of instruction in them. They do not come to the house of God to sit down as learners at the feet of the minister of Christ, to hear what the Lord will speak unto them by the mouth of his servant. They are in any other condition, than in that teachable frame of mind which receives with avidity the instruction of the pulpit. But they must be brought into something like this condition, or they will derive little benefit from the sermon. Now the introduction is the place in which a preacher must gain such control of his hearers as shall inspire them with so great a degree of confidence in his ability and integrity as shall lead them to surrender themselves to his guidance, and to be willing to be instructed by him.

III. The materials of the introduction.

The materials of exordiums to sermons are scarcely less abundant and varied than are the materials of sermons themselves. Yet they may be arranged under a few general heads. There are different principles of classification, according to each of which these materials may be grouped. I purpose now to classify them according to the sources whence they come or are suggested.

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1. Thoughts suggested by the preacher's experience or observation. The materials thus obtained form no inconsiderable part of introductions to sermons. Exordiums composed of such materials are most employed by preachers of large experience and observation, and by those of an original turn of mind. A preacher makes more use of them as he advances in life. Often aged ministers employ them almost to the exclusion of other kinds. They often open a natural and pleasing way of approach to a subject, and when produced by a mind rich in the results of its experience and observation, often furnish examples of the highest excellence in this part of a sermon. Robert Hall, as might be inferred from the cast of his mind, excelled in this species of introduction. Of this we have a fine illustration in his sermon, "On the Duty, Happiness and Honour of maintaining the course prescribed to us by Providence," from the text, Acts xiii. 25, "As John fulfilled his course":—"The life of every individual may be compared to a river: rising in obscurity, increasing by the accession of tributary streams, and, after flowing through a longer or shorter distance, losing itself in some common receptacle. The lives of individuals also, like the course of rivers, may be more or less extensive, but will all vanish and disappear in the gulf of eternity. While a stream is confined within its banks, it fertilizes, enriches

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and improves the country through which it passe but if it deserts its channel it becomes injurious and destructive, a sort of public nuisance, and, by stagnating in lakes and marshes, its exhalations diffuse pestilence and disease around. Some glide away in obscurity and insignificance; while others become celebrated, traverse continents, give names to countries, and assign the boundaries of empires. Some are tranquil and gentle in their course; while others, rushing in torrents, dashing over precipices, and tumbling in waterfalls, become objects of terror and dismay. But, however diversified their character or their direction, all agree in having their course short, limited, and determined; soon they fall into one capacious receptacle; their waters eventually mix in the waves of the ocean. Thus human characters, however various, have one common destiny; their course of action may be greatly diversified, but they all lose themselves in the ocean of eternity.

"Few have appeared on the stage of action whose life was more important than that of the great prophet mentioned in my text. . . . ."[1]

Dr. Bushnell also excelled in this kind of introduction.[2]

2. Thoughts derived from the experience of

[1] Hall's Works, Vol. III., p. 332.

[2] See his sermon on "Respectable Sin," from the text John viii. 9, in his "Sermons for the New Life," Ser. 17.

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observation of others. This kind of introduction is, you perceive, closely allied to the previous class, differing from it only in regard to the personal source of the material. A good illustration of this species of introduction is given us by John McLaurin, an eminent Scottish divine, and friend of Pres. Edwards, in a sermon on "Glorying in the Cross of Christ." Gal. vi. 14,—"But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." He opens his discourse thus:—"It is an old and useful observation, that many of the most excellent objects in the world are objects whose excellency does not appear at first view; as, on the other hand, many things of little value appear more excellent at first than a nearer view discovers them to be. There are some things we admire because we do not know them; and the more we know them, the less we admire them; there are other things we despise through ignorance, because it requires pains and application to discover their beauty, and excellency. This holds true in nothing more than in that glorious, despised object mentioned in the text."[1] Vinet also furnishes an illustration under this head, of a somewhat different character, in his sermon on "The Mysteries of Christianity," from 1 Cor. ii. 9.—"Things which have not

[1] Fish's "History and Repository of Pulpit Eloquence," Vol. II.

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entered into the heart of man." He begins thus:—"'I do not comprehend, therefore I do not believe.' 'The Gospel is full of mysteries, therefore I do not receive the Gospel.' Such is one of the favorite arguments of infidelity. To see how much is made of this, and what confidence it inspires, we might believe it solid, or, at least, specious; but it is neither the one nor the other; it will not bear the slightest attention, the most superficial examination of reason; and if it still enjoys some favor in the world, this is but a proof of the lightness of our judgments upon things worthy of our most serious attention. Upon what, in fact, does this argument rest? Upon the claim of comprehending everything in the religion which God has offered, or could offer to us,—a claim equally unjust, unreasonable, useless. This we proceed to develop."[1]

3. Thoughts suggested by the importance of the subject. Although all the truths of the sacred Scriptures are important, yet some of them are of infinite moment. In discoursing upon such themes, a preacher may occasionally introduce his subject in an impressive manner by calling the attention of his hearers to the great importance to themselves individually of the truth which he is about

[1] Fish's "History and Repository of Pulpit Eloquence," Vol. II., p. 183. See also F. W. Robertson's Sermon on "Religious Despondency," Vol. II., p. 106.

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to present to them. Two cautions, however, should be observed.

(1.) This kind of introduction should not be employed when it is not sustained by the remainder of the discourse. The introduction should be in keeping both with the theme and with the manner in which it is to be presented.

(2.) This species of introduction should not be frequently employed. The attempt of a preacher from week to week to gain the earnest attention of his hearers, by representing that his theme is of greatest moment to them, will tend in the end rather to lessen than to increase their interest. He may after a time find himself in the condition of the boy in the fable, who, by frequently shouting, "Wolf! wolf!" when there was none, found that when the wolf did come, the men would not. Such a course would be like a reader's attempting to emphasize every word, which would have the effect to render no word emphatic. Archbishop Tillotson gives us an example of this kind of introduction in his celebrated sermon entitled, "The Possibility of the Resurrection Asserted and Proved," from Acts xxvi. 8: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" He remarks,—"The resurrection of the dead is one of the great articles of the Christian faith; and yet so it hath happened that this great article of our religion hath been

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made one of the chief objections against it. There is nothing that Christianity hath been more upbraided with-all, both by the heathens of old, and by the infidels of later times, than the impossibility of this article. So that it is a matter of great consideration and consequence, to vindicate our religion in this particular. For if the thing be evidently impossible, then it is highly unreasonable to propose it to the belief of mankind."[1]

4. Thoughts suggested by the occasion. This species of exordium is not often employed by a preacher, since there is seldom anything in the occasion itself to serve him as a fitting introduction to his theme. There will, however, be times in every one's ministry, when a marked providence of God in the form of a national blessing, or calamity, or of a personal affliction, seems to require that the introduction take its materials from the occasion which called the discourse into being. There will also be various stated occasions, such as days of public thanksgiving, of fasting and prayer, of election, of the opening of civil courts, and the like, which furnish an appropriate introduction to the sermon. Exordiums of this kind are often very impressive, since they direct the minds of hearers to some event or circumstance often fitted to excite to a high degree their interest and emotion. John

[1] Tillotson's Works, Vol. III., Ser. 140. See also discourse by Dr South on the "Nature and Measures of Conscience," from 1 John iii. 21. South's Sermons, Vol. I., Ser. 23.

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Wesley gives us a good example in his sermon preached at the Assizes held before Sir Edward Clive, in 1758, and entitled, "The Great Assize,' from the text, Rom. xiv. 10: "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." He opens his discourse thus: "How many circumstances concur to raise the awfulness of the present solemnity! The general concourse of people of every age, sex, rank, and condition of life, willingly or unwillingly gathered together, not only from the neighboring, but from distant parts; criminals, speedily to be brought forth, and having no way to escape; officers, waiting in their various posts to execute the orders which shall be given; and the representative of our gracious sovereign, whom we so highly reverence and honor. The occasion, likewise, of this assembly, adds not a little to the solemnity of it: to hear and determine causes of every kind, some of which are of the most important nature; on which no less depends than life or death; death that uncovers the face of eternity! . . . . . But, awful as this solemnity is, one far more awful is at hand. For yet a little while, and 'we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ,' 'For, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' And in that day, 'every one of us shall give account of himself to God.'"[1]

[1] Wesley's Sermons, Vol. I., Ser. 15. See also Robertson's Sermon preached with reference to the propriety of opening the Sydenham Palace on the Sabbath, Robertson's Works, Vol. II., Ser. 14.

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5. Thoughts suggested by the relation of the theme to one previously discussed. This kind of introduction is not common since there is not often occasion for its use, yet it is sometimes employed with peculiar propriety. Dr. J. Abbadie in a discourse on "The Sacrifice of Abraham," from the text, Gen. xxii. 10, "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son," thus begins: "'The wicked worketh a deceitful work.' This is a maxim of the wise man, which we explained to you last Sunday. The righteous also sometimes does a work which deceives him. This is a truth which we are going to exhibit today. The wicked destroys himself by the efforts which he employs to promote his own gratification. The believer attains an invaluable object when he seems to act against his own interest. This, my brethren, is a truth which the sacrifice of Abraham admirably confirms; here we see a spectacle of horror in appearance, and we see a holy spectacle in reality. It seems, on beholding this object, as if hell must surely triumph, and it is heaven which finally vanquishes. An action which we should suppose all must detest, becomes the eternal object of their admiration. The pulpits propose it for a model and an example. The memory of it is celebrated in all ages, and all believers to the end of time, must make it the perpetual subject of conversation, the constant theme of their praise

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It is, then, not without cause, that we ask of you to apply yourselves to the consideration of this sublime object—'And Abraham,' says the sacred text, 'stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.'"[1]

I have given most of this introduction, because it admirably illustrates how, out of a single leading thought there should grow like twigs out of a limb, the subordinate thoughts which make up the introduction. This kind of exordium is used most frequently in the second of double sermons.

6. Thoughts suggested by the text and context. This class of introductions is, perhaps, more frequently employed than any other. It admits of great variety, and often furnishes a natural and inviting way of approach to a subject. It abounds in biography and history, which are usually entertaining. Men listen with interest to an ordinary narrative, though often indifferent to able reasoning, and sage remarks. Examples of this kind of exordiums are so numerous, that we cannot fail to find them in any volume of sermons. Theremin furnishes us with a good illustration under this head, in his discourse entitled, "The Voices out of the Graves," from the text, Matt. xxvii. 61, "And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other

[1] Fish's "History and Repository of Pulpit Eloquence," Vol. II. p. 105.

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Mary sitting over against the sepulchre." He begins thus: "The great offering was completed. In his tomb lay the Divine Dead; the stone was rolled before the door; the shadows of night had already settled upon Jerusalem, Mount Olivet, and Golgotha. There sit two women, vailed in the darkness of night, and in the deeper darkness of their own sorrow. They sit by the grave. They cling to the spot which inclosed all that was left to them of the best beloved of beings. The night grows darker and darker; the stars step forth, and look down upon the Holy City; then the two Marys arise, and take their departure from the grave, with a long, long, lingering look behind. And now, it is alone, in the midst of the darkness, watched only by the host of unseen angels. . . . Go ye, also, hence; sit down by the grave; that fresh one, or that already moss-covered one, which incloses the remains of those unspeakably beloved by you, Hasten not away; linger there! Listen! There rise voices out of those graves, which impart to you weighty instruction. And what do they teach? A two fold and difficult art. First, how we should die; and secondly, how we should live."[1]

There is an introduction composed of devotional

[1] Fish's "History and Repository of Pulpit Eloquence," Vol. I., p. 547. See also Dr. Bushnell's sermon on "The Hunger of the Soul," ("Sermons for the New Life," Ser. 4.) Also Rev. Phillips Brooks sermon on "The Joy of Self-Sacrifice," ("The Candle of the Lord and other Sermons," Ser. 2.)

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thoughts, which is rather a form of exordium, than a kind, and may come under each of the classes named. But since it is most frequently composed of thoughts suggested by the text, it may be properly noticed under this head. It is a form of introduction very rarely used in the American pulpit, but is a characteristic of the German. It was formerly the practice of the German preachers to open their discourses with an invocation to the Deity, in which were generally embodied thoughts suggested by the theme, which was soon to follow. At times, this prayer included the whole of the introduction, at other times it formed but a small part of it, yet it was designed so to join upon the other part, as to form a complete whole. As an example, see the discourse of Melancthon on "The Security of God's Children," from the text, John x. 28, "Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." He begins thus: "To Thee, Almighty and true God, eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all creatures, together with Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, to Thee, the wise, good, true, righteous, compassionate, pure, gracious God, we render thanks that Thou hast hitherto upheld the church in these lands, and graciously afforded it protection and care, and we earnestly beseech Thee evermore to gather among us an inheritance for Thy Son, which may praise Thee to all eter-

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nity."[1] This prayer forms only a part of his introduction. It is the modern practice of the German preachers to put the prayer not at the beginning of the introduction, but at its close, just before entering on the development of the subject. The preacher begins his discourse by reading the Scripture from which the text is to be taken. When he commences to read, the audience rise, and remain standing until he has finished the reading, when they resume their seats. The preacher then enters on his introduction, and continues for about five minutes, when he offers a short prayer for divine assistance, the audience keeping their seats, and then he goes right on to the development of his theme. As regards the use of an exordium in the form of a prayer, I remark:

(1.) The devotional introduction should be employed only when an extraordinary occasion seems to demand it. There may come such an occasion in every one's ministry, when, in the presence of an affecting visitation of God, the preacher finds both his audience and himself in such deep emotion as seems to require that in the very opening of his discourse he give utterance to his feelings in prayer. But such occasions will be exceedingly rare, and a preacher should not venture on this

[1] Fish's "History and Repository of Pulpit Eloquence," Vol. I., p 475.

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form of introduction, when the circumstances, and the condition of his audience, will not fully sustain him.

(2.) The advantages of the devotional introduction may generally be secured by adapting to the theme the service which precedes the sermon. The introduction to a discourse should, in fact, begin at, or very near, the opening of public worship. The preacher, from the first, should keep in mind the subject of his sermon, and should so conduct all the previous services, as gradually to gather the scattered thoughts of his hearers, and bring them nearer and nearer together, until at last, he concentrates them all on the one thought of his sermon. But he should not so far adapt the introductory services to his theme, as to acquaint the audience with the subject on which he is to discourse. This would abate curiosity—a fruitful source of attention. The adaptation should be carried just far enough to bring the thoughts of the hearers within the sphere of the thought to be presented, so that the thoughts of the hearers shall glide easily and naturally into the theme of the sermon. This precept,—the dictate alike of good sense and good taste—is perhaps more often violated than any other. From listening to the opening services of public worship in many churches, one can gain no conception of what is to be the subject of the sermon. He is led by the preacher

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along a pathway enveloped in utter darkness, in absolute ignorance of where it will end. A preacher who takes such a course, will, when he comes to the introduction of his sermon, often find his audience less prepared to enter with him on the discussion of his theme than when they entered the sanctuary. The opening services may have been interesting and profitable to the audience, and yet may have been all the time leading them directly away from the subject for which their minds and hearts should have been prepared. The preacher, therefore, is obliged in his introduction to do what should have been accomplished in the previous services—to build from the very foundation, the interest of his audience in his theme. All the previous parts of public worship in which he has led the people are of no account in aiding him to gather the attention and interest of his hearers about the subject on which he is to address them. Viewed from a preacher's standpoint, the idea which should preside over and direct the various parts of public worship should be unity. The theme of the sermon should give law to them all. The services before the sermon should, in effect, form a part of the introduction, and the services after the sermon should be so conducted as to deepen the impression made by the conclusion.

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LECTURE VII.

THE INTRODUCTION—QUALITIES—PLACE—TIME OF COMPOSING.

IV. We come, now, to note the desirable qualities of the introduction.

1. Unity. This quality does not forbid the gathering of several thoughts into an introduction, when they all tend to make a single impression. It forbids only several independent thoughts, each of which could form a separate exordium to the same theme. There should be one main thought, on which the others depend, and around which they cluster. The thoughts should be allied to each other. They should belong to the same family, and their course should be homeward.

2. Congruity. It includes congruity both to the thought, and to the rhetorical character of the sermon.

(1.) Congruity to the thought of the sermon. The main thought of the introduction should be closely allied to the theme of the discourse. It should not be an offspring of the theme, else its

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proper place would be in the development. But it should be a thought lying close to the subject, and suggested by it. Vinet rightly tells us that "the exordium should be drawn from an idea which immediately touches the subject without forming a part of it."[1] This is the true ideal of an introduction, though perhaps not often realized. If another thought lie nearer the subject than the thought of the exordium, then that thought should itself make the introduction. Hence:

(*a.*) This quality forbids an independent introduction. However full of valuable thoughts such an introduction may be, however elaborate in style, and interesting to an audience, it is not an introduction, but simply another discourse placed in front of the sermon. When the preacher comes to its close, instead of bringing his audience to his subject, he finds that he has brought them to the brink of a chasm across which they cannot leap.

(*b.*) This quality also forbids a commutable introduction. If the correct ideal of an introduction is one whose chief thought is suggested by the subject of the sermon, and lies nearest to that subject, it evidently cannot exist as an introduction apart from the theme which called it into being. It may, indeed, exist as an independent essay, but not as an introduction. Hence any attempt to transfer

[1] Hom., p. 271.

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it, and make it serve as an introduction to a different theme, will only end in forcing upon such theme a poor introduction never belonging to it. We have, indeed, high authority for the use of commutable introductions. Demosthenes and Cicero employed them, keeping several on hand to use as occasion might require. But it must be remembered that the orations of the ancient orators were often such as to require exordiums containing a defence of their character or acts. Introductions of this kind, including often only a few sentences, they frequently transferred from one speech to another. No such necessity of personal defence is laid on the sacred orator.

(c.) Congruity to the thought of the sermon promotes variety in introductions. Were every subject to furnish its own introduction, there would be as many introductions as subjects, and they would differ as widely from each other, as the themes which called them into being. Thus there would be no more danger of sameness of introductions, than of sameness of subjects.

(2.) Congruity to the rhetorical character of the sermon. This requires that the thought of the introduction be clothed in a garb similar to that of the other parts of the discourse. The language, figures, and illustrations employed should all be in harmony with those used in the remainder of the sermon. For it is evident that though the thought

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of the introduction correspond to that of the rest of the discourse, yet if it be set forth in a style greatly at variance with the style of the other parts of the sermon, the introduction will fail of its end almost as surely as if the thought itself had been at variance with the theme. Yet such incongruity in style is not uncommon among preachers, who often from want of time to prepare a discourse make a florid introduction to a bald sermon.

3. Simplicity. It includes simplicity both in thought, and in expression.

(1.) Simplicity in thought. It is evident that a discourse should open with natural and simple thoughts—thoughts readily suggested, and easily understood. For the hearers are not in such an intellectual condition as to qualify them to enter at once on recondite thoughts. They are not prepared to grapple with abstruse thoughts, which, should they meet farther on in the discourse, they might easily conquer. Hence they need to be led gently at first—to be aroused gradually—until they shall gird themselves to follow wherever the preacher may lead the way. If he begin with profound thoughts, he will be likely to discourage a large part of his hearers from following him.

(2.) Simplicity in expression. The beginning of a discourse evidently as much requires simplicity in expression as in thought. Indeed, it would

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be difficult to say which is more important to the success of an introduction. The simplest and most natural thoughts, if set forth in an inflated style—a style through which the preacher's self-conceit and eagerness for approbation clearly shine—is as fatal to its success, as if it were filled with recondite thoughts. For hearers are then cool and critical, in a condition to notice the least departure of the speaker from the proprieties of the subject and the occasion, and keen to detect any attempt to display himself through fine writing—a condition in which they will not be when they shall have become either interested or indifferent in the middle of the discourse. Hence (*a.*) this quality of an introduction forbids an evidently elaborate style. While it is true that no part of a sermon demands more care in its composition than the exordium, it is also true that in no other part does an obviously elaborate style work greater injury to the discourse. For this reason, though the introduction demands the best efforts of a preacher, he must endeavor to attain in its composition that "highest art which conceals art," so that it shall appear as simple and artless as nature itself.

(*b.*) It also forbids a vehement style. An impetuous style is forbidden in an introduction simply because it is not called for, and hence is unnatural. There may be occasions when such a style in an exordium is appropriate. Such an occasion was

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that when Cicero rose to address the Roman Senate in the presence of Cataline; but occasions like these are rare to a preacher. The audiences assembled to hear the word of God are usually in the calmest state possible, and hence both the preacher and his style at the beginning of his sermon should correspond to this condition of his hearers.

4. Modesty. With respect to this quality we may note the following points:

(1.) A modest introduction forbids frequent reference to one's self. This is sometimes made for the purpose of defending one's character or acts. Personal introductions of this kind are often allowable in secular orations. In ancient oratory they were often called for and appropriate. The orators of the ancient republics were frequently put on their own defence before the people, and on such occasions, personal introductions were proper. They are also appropriate in the political and forensic speeches of modern times. But in sacred discourse, the relation which a preacher sustains to his audience almost entirely forbids the use of personal introductions. He stands in the pulpit not to defend himself. He stands there as an ambassador of God, commissioned to proclaim sublime and awful truths—truths in whose presence a regard for his own reputation ought wholly to disappear. He should not concern himself, nor appear solicitous about the opinions which others

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may have of him, but should be so intent on fulfilling his mission as to lose all thought of self. But if, at any time, a preacher's reputation would seem to call for a personal introduction to a sermon, it is quite time for him to consider whether the cause of Christ would not be promoted by his permanent retirement from the pulpit. Occasionally a reference to one's self in an introduction is made for the purpose of apologizing for the discourse. Such apologies should rarely, if ever, be made, for they spring either from a preacher's desire to exalt himself intellectually before his audience—a desire which ought not for a moment to govern him,—or from the conviction, that owing to want of ability, or want of time he will fail to do justice to his theme. But if this conviction spring from a conscious want of talent, its announcement is an offence against both modesty and good sense—against modesty, because it is obtruding upon hearers private matters which in no respect concern them,—and against good sense, because if such deficiency of talent really exist, the proclamation of it will serve only to acquaint the hearers with what they might not otherwise perceive, and so will make them indifferent listeners. But if manifestly no such want of ability exist, then the profession of such want will serve only to make the audience suspicious that the preacher is thus through the semblance of modesty attempt-

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ing to compliment himself—a suspicion which will greatly diminish his influence over them. But, on the other hand, an apology for the sermon on the ground of insufficient time to prepare it, is equally indelicate and unwise—indelicate, because it is obtruding on hearers personal matter which does not concern them: unwise, because it tends to beget the suspicion that the preacher is quite as solicitous to sustain his own reputation, as to honor divine truth. Hence good taste and good sense alike demand that a preacher should rarely, if ever, make an apology for his sermon. Let him faithfully employ in the preparation of his discourse all the time and ability which God gives him, and then let him stand up and preach it like a man, who feels that he has done the best he could do in the circumstances, and leave the result with God. There are many improprieties other than frequent allusions to one's self, which do violence to a modest introduction, but it is impossible to give specific rules for guidance in each case. A preacher must chiefly rely on his sense of delicacy, corrected and refined by constant practice, and the study of models.

(2.) A modest introduction is adapted to secure the good will of an audience. It is the most delicate compliment which a speaker can give his hearers, for he shows them alike by his thought, his style, and his manner, the high estimation in

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which he holds them. Perhaps he can exhibit no other quality which will win an audience so effectually as this. Hence it has always been insisted on by masters of oratory. On this point, Cicero, in his "De Oratore,"[1] has given us both his experience and precept. "To me, indeed," he says, "whoever speak best, and whoever can do it most fluently and ornately, yet unless they approach timidly to the place of speaking, and are greatly disturbed ('perturbantur') in the beginning of the oration, seem well nigh impudent; and yet this cannot happen, for in the degree to which one speaks best, he greatly fears the difficulty of speaking excellently, and the various issues of an oration, and the expectation of the audience." ..... "Whoever indeed" (on such an occasion) "is not modest —a thing which I see in very many—him I think worthy not only of rebuke, but even of punishment. I indeed am wont to observe in you, what I also very often experience in myself, that I turn pale ('exalbescam') in the beginning of a speech, and tremble all over. Indeed, when a young man, I was in the commencement of a speech so frightened out of my senses, that I shall ever regard it as the greatest favor on the part of Quintus Maximus, that he, at once, adjourned the court so soon as he saw me broken down and weakened by fear." An experience of this sort is more apt to attend

[1] L. I., c. 26.

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the beginning of an extemporaneous, than of a written, discourse.[1]

5. Brevity. No absolute rule can be given, which shall determine the length of all introductions, since some sermons require longer introductions than others. One's judgment must decide in each case, as to the appropriate length. Let him, however, bear in mind, that he will be more liable to err on the side of length than of brevity. Young preachers are sometimes led to lengthen their exordiums through fear that they may not have material sufficient to fill up the remainder of their discourses. Hence they sometimes make an introduction which stands before the rest of the sermon like a fine portico in front of a hut. But in the effort to avoid long exordiums, care should be taken not to go to the opposite extreme. Excessive brevity is well nigh as bad as excessive length. Do not hurry the hearer to your subject, but conduct him thither by gentle and easy steps.

V. The place of the introduction.

The relative position of the text and the introduction varies in the practice of preachers. It is a common, but not universal, practice in Germany, to place the introduction before the text. In England and in our own country, it is the practice to

[1] See Bautain's experience in extemporaneous addresses, "Art of Extempore Speaking," p. 232.

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put the introduction after the text. Were we to view a sermon simply as an oration, the German arrangement would seem to be more consistent with usage in other kinds of orations, as well as more artistic—less abrupt and bald—than the English; but the practice has become so uniform among the churches, and so familiar to them, and has also so many advantages, that it is doubtless not expedient to attempt a change. There are, however, special occasions, when a departure from this custom is appropriate, and will command the attention all the more from its novelty.

VI. The time of composing the introduction.

Two methods have been recommended.

1. After the composition of the remainder of the sermon.

2. Before the composition of the rest of the discourse.

The chief arguments for the first method are, that a preacher knows best how to compose an introduction when he knows just what he has to introduce, and is also less liable to put into his exordium, material already used in the body of his sermon. The main objection to this method is its unnaturalness. We do not thus prepare to express thoughts in conversation. Besides, a preacher needs to compose the introduction in order to prepare himself in the best manner to enter on the composition of the remainder of his sermon.

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The chief objection to the second method will be removed, if a preacher will put off composing his introduction until he shall have collected and arranged the material of the rest of his discourse. He will then know what he wishes to introduce, and will be in less danger of inserting in his introduction material which belongs in the development of the sermon, while he will also have whatever of impetus is gained in composing the exordium, to carry him forward in preparing the remainder of the sermon. By this method, too, the style of the discourse will be more uniform and consistent, than by the other method. This was the course recommended and practiced by Cicero.[1]

[1] "De Oratore," L. II., c. 77.

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LECTURE VIII.

THE EXPOSITION—DEFINITION—DESIGN—IMPORTANCE—SOURCES—FORMS—DESIRABLE QUALITIES—PLACE.

I. The terms of Latin origin chosen to designate this division of a sermon indicate pretty accurately its definition. We have "explanation," "explication," and "exposition,"—all indicating one result, though reaching it by different processes; viz.—"*explanatio*," (from *explano*), the act of spreading out the meaning, and so of making it plain, (or a plain); "*explicatio*," (from *explico*), the act of unfolding the meaning, and so of making it all visible; and "*expositio*," (from *expono*), the act of setting forth the meaning, and thus making it manifest. Hence, in accordance with the primitive significations of these terms, the exposition in a sermon is defined to be that part by which the exact meaning of the text is attempted to be made clear to an audience.

II. The design of the exposition is to convince an audience that the theme comes legitimately from the text. The exposition is the means, the conviction of the hearers the aim. It addresses itself

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wholly to the understanding of a hearer, and tries to satisfy him that the subject of the sermon comes to him clothed with Divine authority. It corresponds in design to the exposition in secular discourse. In forensic pleadings the aim of the exposition is to show that the point made, or position taken, is sustained by the authority of the State speaking through a statute, or a judicial decision. In congressional debates, exposition is often employed to prove that the position assumed is sustained by the Constitution, by a national statute, or by a name of high authority. For example, Mr. Webster, in reply to General Hayne, endeavored to show that his interpretation of the Constitution in regard to the point in debate was the one taken by President Madison.

III. The importance of the exposition. An exposition of a text is not always needed, but when required, is of great value. The greatness of its aim shows its importance. When compared with the aim of exposition in secular oratory, how vastly is the former seen to transcend the latter in importance! In forensic oratory, exposition may decide claims to property and to life; in congressional debate, it may determine the rights of individuals and of states; but how insignificant are these issues compared with the magnitude of the end sought by exposition in sacred oratory—the bringing of men to acknowledge, and to stand in the presence of a

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truth of infinite moment to them, until they shall feel its power coming upon them, and renovating their hearts and lives! For unless hearers become convinced that the subject on which the preacher proposes to discourse, is found in the text, the sermon will have little power over them. The human conscience refuses to bow to the dicta of man. It yields only to a Divine behest. Hence a preacher must invest his theme with the robe of Deity, if he would have his hearers bow before it. If he fail to convince them that the thought which he presents is an utterance of God, it is all over with him so far as power to move his audience is concerned.

IV. The sources of the materials of the exposition.

The materials are gathered from the following sources:

1. From the language of the text. The thought may be simple and easily understood, yet the language in which it is clothed, may render it obscure. There may be words and phrases which require explanation to a common audience—a fact more general than ministers are wont to think. Although most regular attendants on public worship have considerable general knowledge of the truths of the Bible, yet they are more deficient than is commonly thought, in an accurate understanding of much of its language. A preacher, therefore, should be on his guard, lest in this particular, he

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give his hearers credit for more intelligence than they have, while he should be careful not to wound their feelings by seeming to go on the supposition that they know little or nothing. An explanation of a word or phrase can often be made without seeming to make it.

2. From the thought of the text. The thought may be obscure, while the language in which it is expressed, is clear. It may be a thought without the range of ordinary thinking—a thought beyond the circuit in which most minds revolve. Such are many of the truths revealed in the Scriptures. There are doctrines which need to be set forth in their true light, and distinguished from false conceptions and statements of them. In discoursing on texts containing such truths, a preacher should try to set forth the precise idea to his hearers, that they may gain the very conception of it which the Holy Spirit designed to give.

3. From the context. An examination of the surroundings of a text often reveals abundant materials for its exposition. Materials drawn from this source are not only abundant and easily obtained, but are also often the most appropriate to set forth the meaning. Most texts are not isolated passages of Scripture. They are not placed in the Bible side by side, as jewels set in a crown—each independent of the others, and borrowing from them no luster,—but are parts of distinct wholes

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and to be rightly understood, each must be viewed in the light of its whole. One might as well attempt to give to an audience a just conception of the pyramid of Cheops, or of the temple of Minerva, by showing one of its stones, as to endeavor to convey to them an adequate conception of the truth in one of numerous passages of Scripture, by exhibiting a single sentence from such passage.

4. From parallel passages. It has been well said that "the Bible is its best interpreter." In skillful hands no commentary throws so much light on different passages as the Bible itself. It is also a commentary the most satisfactory, and the most popular with the masses, and often may be employed by a skillful preacher with marked success in the explanation of a text. Exposition composed of materials derived from this source was much used by the divines of the last century. It was a favorite method of the elder Edwards. It has now unfortunately gone almost entirely into disuse. This is probably owing, in part, to a prevalent idea that the province of a preacher is more that of an orator than of a teacher. Hence, in conformity to this view, all the material must be run into the oratorical mold, and over every part of it must preside the "law of constant progress," which seems to forbid a delay to consult parallel passages of Scripture. This method of exposition still prevails in Scotland.

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5. From general Biblical Literature. This term seems the best at command by which to represent a large mass of materials not already named. In its largest sense, it embraces the materials included under the previous heads, but it is now used especially to represent whatever of history, biography, geography, topography, descriptions of national customs, manners, and the like, come properly within the province of Biblical literature. A comprehensive knowledge of these subjects furnishes abundant materials for the exposition of numerous passages of Scripture. Indeed, the supply of materials for this purpose is well nigh inexhaustible to one who has made himself familiar with the vast domain of Biblical literature. Knowledge in this department, too, is constantly increasing. Light is cast more and more on the Biblical record from scientific researches. Numerous passages formerly obscure, have, by modern research, been made clear. A preacher should so acquaint himself with the results reached in the various departments of scientific inquiry, so far as they relate to the sacred word, as to be able to employ them in making clear a text, whenever occasion shall require. The sources which have been named furnish the chief materials for the exposition, but fall far short of supplying all. Indeed, all the materials would embrace all knowledge—all truth. For since each truth is a fragment of one symmetrical

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whole, it can be best understood only when viewed in its relation to that whole. Thus God, who alone comprehends all truth, can alone fully know each individual truth. Hence, whatever knowledge a preacher may have on any subject, will rarely be without use when he attempts to expound divine truth. "The knowledge," says a writer in Tacitus, "which we have of many departments of learning, adorns us even when discussing a subject not included in these branches, and where you would least think it, shines out and becomes evident."[1]

V. The forms of the exposition.

Having looked at the sources from which the materials of the exposition are derived, and viewed these materials, we come next to notice the general forms which they assume in the exposition. As these forms have been partially anticipated in what has been said under the last general head, it is not now necessary to do more than to indicate them, reserving a discussion of the qualities which they all should possess, for future consideration. Since the obscurity of a text lies either in its language, or in its thought, we have two general forms of the exposition,—the verbal, and the rational.

1. The verbal exposition attempts to make a text clear by removing obscurity from the language in which the thought is expressed. It takes various forms,

[1] Tacitus, "De Oratoribus Dialogus," Sec. 32.

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(1) The paraphrastical exposition. Often the bare statement of a text in other words is a sufficient explanation.

(2.) The philological exposition. This has to do chiefly with the grammar of a text—the meaning of the words, the construction, and the various interpretations of a passage, and the like. See, as an example, Robert Hall's sermon on "Christ's Pre-existence, Condescension, and Exaltation," text, Phil. ii. 5–9.[1]

(3.) The historical exposition. Its province is to set forth whatever customs, circumstances, and the like, are needed to make clear the phraseology of the text. For an example, see Dr. Bushnell's sermon on "Spiritual Dislodgements," text, Jer. xlviii. 11:[2] also, Robert Hall's sermon on "The Divine Complacency in Public Worship," text, Ps. lxxxvii. 2.[3]

2. The rational exposition endeavors to make a text clear by removing obscurity from the thought itself. The language may be simple and clear, while the idea which it contains may be "hard to be understood." The rational exposition seeks to attain this end, by a great variety of methods—such as definition, description, illustration, comparison, contrast, and the like. Not infrequently

[1] Harper's Ed., Hall's Works, Vol. III., p. 340.
[2] "Sermons for the New Life," Ser. 22.
[3] Hall's Works, Vol. IV., Ser. 20.

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several of these forms are combined in the same exposition.

VI. The desirable qualities of the exposition.

1. Perspicuity should be the leading quality in an exposition. Obscurity in it may result,

(1.) From ignorance of the meaning of the text. It is evident that one cannot convey to another a clearer idea on any subject, than that which he has himself. One cannot give what he does not possess. Water can no more rise above its source, than a preacher make his hearers see a thought more clearly than he sees it himself.

(2.) From the introduction of learned exegesis. While a preacher cannot be too skillful in the knowledge and use of the various processes by which the meaning of Scripture is elicited, he cannot too carefully abstain from all exhibition of these processes to his audience. He should aim to give them the results of his exegetical labors, without informing them of the methods by which he reached those results.

(3.) From the introduction of scientific terms. A preacher by long study and habit of thought, becomes so accustomed to abstract and scientific terms, that he is apt to overlook the difficulty which minds unaccustomed to the nomenclatures of the sciences, experience in attempting to master scientific terms. An exposition which they would readily understand, if given in simple and concrete

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terms, becomes an enigma to them, when conveyed in philosophical language. Such language is as little understood by them as many terms of medical science are by us. Hence a preacher cannot be too much on his guard to avoid the use of such expressions. Let him employ these more concise and exact forms of speech in his thinking and studies, but cast them aside when he goes forth to speak to the people.

2. The exposition should be exhaustive. It should set forth the entire thought of the passage selected for the text. An exposition which presents only a part of the thought, however perspicuous it may be, is, so far forth, deficient as an exposition. Its province is to set before an audience the exact idea of the text in its fullness. Yet in order to do this, it is not necessary for one who has mastered his text, to exhaust also the patience of his hearers.

3. The exposition should be convincing. Without this, all other qualities of an exposition are useless. An audience must be made not only to see the thought of a text, and to see it in its completeness, but also to see the theme growing more or less directly out of it. They should be able to see the one idea of the text germinating, and shooting up through the theme toward its full maturity in the sermon.

4. The exposition should be interesting. This

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is an important quality in an exposition, for if it be destitute of this, a preacher will find it very difficult to carry into the discussion of his theme, the attention which he may have gained in his introduction. There will be between his exordium and his subject, a desert which his hearers will not care to cross. Hence he should endeavor to throw his exposition into a form which shall not only allow the interest of his audience to pass unchecked from his introduction to his theme, but shall also serve to increase their interest. Let us notice briefly, the ways in which this quality of an exposition is promoted, and in which it is impaired.

(1.) It is promoted by the use of the narrative form of expression. No form of speech pleases more than the narrative. And a preacher by a little reflection and ingenuity will often be able to throw the explanation into this shape.

(2.) It is also promoted by the figurative form of expression. It often happens that the meaning of a text can be felicitously set forth by figurative language—an apt simile or metaphor—a form of statement highly adapted to awaken the attention and interest of hearers. It aids them to understand an abstract truth, by placing it before them in a concrete form. It is the manner of expression in which our Saviour delighted. On the other hand,

(3.) This quality of an exposition is impaired by the use of formal definition. This stops the onward

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flow of the discourse, and thus tends to check interest in the hearers. For the time being the preacher divests himself of the character of an orator, and puts on the garb of a philosopher, and when he resumes his oratorical character, he cannot expect to find the interest which, in his introduction, he had excited in his audience, unabated. He must, indeed, define in his own mind, the meaning of the text with the utmost exactness, but let him avoid, so far as possible, presenting to the people, this meaning in an abstract form. There are, indeed, texts whose explanation seems to require this mode of presentation; for example, those containing the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, but even the definition of the meaning of such texts may be relieved of the appearance and the effect of formality by joining with it an appropriate illustration.

(4.) This quality is also impaired by the use of analytic description. Nothing is more uninteresting to the people, than a description of the several minute parts into which a text may be analyzed. A preacher who attempts it, must possess more than ordinary talent in order to carry the interest of his audience with him. Instead of placing the different elements that compose the meaning of a text, side by side before his audience, much as an anatomist might dispose the various bones of an animal which he describes, let him adjust each to its proper place and then exhibit the whole thought

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in its concrete form, and he will rarely fail to interest his hearers.

5. The exposition should be modest.

(1.) In style. It should be composed in a style so simple as neither to withdraw attention from the thought, nor give undue promise in respect to the sermon.

(2.) In the exhibition of learning. An evident attempt of a preacher to display learning, will disgust the more intelligent and sensible of his audience, and thus greatly weaken his influence over them. This precept would forbid a frequent quoting of the Scriptures in the original. This should rarely be done before common audiences. Nor would the rule permit a frequent quoting of the opinions of various commentators by name.

(3.) In the treatment of the authorized version of the Scriptures. No human version of the sacred writings will probably ever be perfect, and it is quite certain that ours is, in many respects, far from perfection, and yet it admits of a reasonable doubt whether any other translation will for many years to come satisfy more generally the Christian public, though its thorough revision, recently made, was an end much to be desired. The language of the former version has become so embalmed in the memory and affection of Christians who speak the English tongue, and so inwrought into all English literature, that it is doubtful whether

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it would be expedient to change materially the authorized version. Its very language has, even to many who are not Christians, all the sanctity and authority of the original. True modesty in a preacher would therefore seem to require that he should treat this version with reverence before the people. This precept is not infrequently violated both by attempting unnecessarily to correct the translation, and by dilating on its defects.

6. The exposition should be brief. Its length should, of course, be determined by the necessity of the case. The more difficult a text, the longer it will ordinarily take to set forth its meaning. But in no instance should the exposition in a topical discourse be very lengthy. This will appear if we notice both the injurious tendencies of a protracted exposition, and the causes of it.

An exposition of undue length tends (1.) to destroy whatever of interest may have been excited in the hearers. The aim of a preacher in his introduction should be to attract his audience to his theme. If, now, when he brings them to his exposition, he detain them there one moment longer than is necessary to convince them that his theme comes from his text, that one moment's delay must tend to abate the interest awakened in them. As the conviction of the understanding in reference to a single point—the legitimate connection of the text

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and the theme—is a preacher's object in the exposition, so when he shall have reached this end, he should stop at once. Nothing should be said either to display learning, or to gratify the curiosity of hearers. The exposition is the bridge which connects the introduction with the main part of the discourse, and the audience should be taken over it as quickly as possible.

A protracted exposition also tends (2.) to destroy the designed effect of the discourse. A preacher should bear in mind, that all of the sermon which precedes the subject, is only preliminary to it. If, now, this part be unnecessarily protracted, it will cause either such a prolongation of the rest of the discourse, as shall make the entire sermon wearisome, or such an abbreviation of the remainder, as shall prevent proper discussion of the subject. But if regard to the symmetry of the sermon shall lead the preacher to prolong unduly the body of his discourse, he will find, when he has come to his conclusion, that he has so exhausted his hearers, that they will rarely be inclined to enter the emotional condition into which he would lead them. On the other hand, should he attempt to prevent this result by abridging the remainder of his sermon, he will find that he has done such poor justice to his theme, that his audience is not in a condition to respond to his appeals in the conclusion.

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Turning now to note the chief causes of an unduly protracted exposition, we may name,

(1.) The want of proper apprehension of what is to be explained. A requisite to brevity of speech on any subject, is a good knowledge of it. Whoever sees a thought the most clearly, can, with other things equal, convey that thought in fewest words to others. If the thought stand out before his mental vision, like the sun—all radiant with light,—it will not take him long to make others see its brightness. It is only when an idea which we wish to exhibit, is in a fog to ourselves that we grope about with our hearers after it. The first thing, therefore, to which a preacher should address himself in the preparation of a sermon, is the mastery of the text. Let him wrestle with it in its original form, until he is sure that he has the very shade of the idea which the Divine Spirit designed to convey in the passage. Let him look through the text, and around it, until he knows that he apprehends its true meaning, and then he will find little difficulty in presenting it to his hearers with brevity.

(2.) An injudicious selection of materials. In efforts to convince the understanding, every thought not needed, is injurious. Hence a preacher, in selecting materials for the exposition from the mass which he has gathered, should reject whatever he finds will not aid him to secure his object. However interesting and instructive a

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thought may be, it should have no place in the exposition, unless it contribute to the object in view. As a preacher conducts his hearers into the exposition simply to convince them on a single point, so he should hasten to lead them out, just so soon as he shall have gained his object.

(3.) An improper arrangement of materials. Next in importance to the possession of materials for any purpose, is a fitting disposition of them. One house excels another not so much by reason of difference in the materials of their construction, as in the arranging of those materials. It is largely so with discourses both secular and sacred. With the same good materials, a sermon will be inefficient or powerful according to the manner in which it is constructed. But in no part of it is a skillful arrangement more important than in the exposition. For since the design is simply to convince the understanding, all the materials should be carefully adjusted to the laws of thought—to conduct the mind straight onward to conviction. There must be no retrograde or side movement, but thought must follow thought in a straight line, and with the certainty of demonstration.

(4.) The want of time in the preparation of the exposition. This is often the first cause, the parent of the others. Here a want of time is fatal. In the composition of whatever other parts of a sermon a preacher may hurry on without detriment

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to his discourse, in the exposition, at least, he must be deliberate. Here he must take time to do his work well, for if not done well, it is not done at all.

VII. The place of the exposition.

1. Immediately after the introduction. This is the usual place of the exposition, and that into which it naturally falls.

2. In the place of the introduction. The exposition opens a discourse, whenever a text is of such a nature that the exposition itself is the best introduction to the theme. In such cases, however, it is perhaps more accurate to say that the exposition combines with the introduction, and that the blending of the two forms the introduction to the subject.

3. In one or more of the main divisions of a sermon. It often happens that a text requires a longer explanation than can properly be given to it before the announcement of the subject. In such cases the explanation is thrown into the development, and forms one or more of the chief heads of the discourse. This occurs most frequently in the textual and the scholastic forms of division. In the latter the exposition generally occupies two divisions; as, for example, "The righteous shall live by faith." (Rom. i. 17.) I. Who are the righteous here spoken of? II. What is meant by the phrase, "live by faith"? III. Show that the righteous do live by faith.

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LECTURE IX.

THE SUBJECT—DEFINITION—CLASSIFICATION—QUALITIES—ANNOUNCEMENT—FORMS.

I. The subject of a sermon may be defined as that part of it by which the main thought to be developed, is announced. The etymology of the word indicates its province. It is from the Latin "*subjectum*,"—the thing placed under,—and rhetorically signifies that which is brought under thought or discussion. In like manner the word theme, from the Greek "θέμα," denotes that which is laid down and proposed for discussion.

II. The classification of subjects. The themes of sermons though as abundant as are the teachings of inspiration, may be gathered into two classes—doctrinal and preceptive,—the first setting forth what is to be believed, the second what is to be done. These two general classes have been variously subdivided by writers on homiletics. For example, Pres. E. Porter makes four classes—doctrinal, ethical, historical, and hortatory, while Vinet, omit-

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ting the hortatory, adds to the above, a class of subjects drawn from the contemplation of nature, and a class of psychological subjects. Dr. Fitch makes two classes: (1.) Scriptural texts treated as such (didactic, moral, biographical, historical, parabolic, and prophetic; (2.) Biblical topics (doctrinal and moral).

III. The qualities of the subject.

Reference is now made to the proper qualities of the thought, and not to those of its expression. They are unity and brevity.

1. In its fullest extent the unity of the subject includes three particular unities—unity of the subject with the text, of the subject in itself, and of the subject with the sermon.

(1.) The unity of the subject with the text need not now be discussed, since it has been treated of under the heads of the text and the exposition.

(2.) The unity of the subject in itself requires that the parts of the theme when united form one whole. Hence it does not forbid the existence of several predicates in a theme, provided that they are co-ordinate, and can be brought together under one general attribute. For example, Prov. iii. 17, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." The theme might be, Christian life (or the fear of the Lord) is peaceful and joyous. Both of these predicates can be re-united under one general attribute of Christian life—happiness. Thus also, John iv. 24, "God is a spirit, and they

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that worship him, must worship in spirit and in truth." The theme might be, The worship of God must be spiritual and truthful. Here both predicates combine to represent the acceptableness of divine worship. Nor does unity in a subject forbid the existence of several grammatical subjects in a theme, if they can be brought under one general attribute or head. For example, Mark xiii. 33, "Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is." The theme might be stated thus—Watchfulness and prayerfulness are necessary through our ignorance of the time of Christ's coming. Here watchfulness and prayerfulness are set forth as qualities which, taken together, form that kind of character which prepares the Christian at any time for the coming of Christ. It is, however, better to avoid so far as possible this form of stating a theme. And it can generally be done by a little care and ingenuity. Thus the last subject would be better stated by throwing the qualities into the predicate, thus,—Our ignorance of the time of Christ's coming should make us watchful and prayerful. Nor will the principle of unity in a theme be violated should there be several grammatical subjects or predicates remote from each other, and even the opposite, in case they can be brought under one general head. Thus Robert Hall has a sermon on "The Discouragements and Supports of the Christian Minister," from

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the text 2 Cor. iv. 1, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not."[1] Here the two parts of the subject come under the general head of experiences in the ministerial office. It is proper, however, here to remark, that many texts which, at first view, seem to require a theme with several grammatical subjects or predicates that cannot be brought under one head, will be found on careful inspection, to admit of being reduced to a simple theme. The preacher should endeavor to bring his subject into this form. He should labor to get at the main thought set forth in the text, and, divesting it of everything extraneous, reduce it to the simplest form possible. It is generally not well to treat, at length, of opposite qualities in the same discourse. When these must be introduced, it is usually better, having briefly noticed the one, to lay out our strength on the other, and that which is more to our purpose in the sermon.

(3.) The unity of the subject with the body of the sermon requires that all the divisions of a discourse together form a unity in the subject. They should embrace no more thought and no less, than that which is wrapt up in the theme. They should be, so to speak, a prolongation of the thought in the theme—the thought which, shooting forth from the germ in the text, shall take to itself a definite

[1] Vol. I., p. 127.

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form in the theme, and pour forth its life-forces to fashion all the branches of the discourse. A single division, however small, which has not come forth from the theme, is as foreign to a sermon, and as unsightly in it, as a withered branch would be in a luxuriant tree, into whose foliage it had been thrown.

The unity of the theme with the development of a sermon also requires that all the thoughts of a discourse together form a unity in the subject. Not only should all the divisions together compose a unity in the theme, but also the sum of all the clusters of thoughts which gather themselves around the different divisions should together form a oneness in the subject. A single thought which is not thus pendent to a division, and hence does not grow out of the theme, however profound or beautiful in itself, is as unsightly as would be a wreath of faded leaves or flowers hung in the midst of living foliage. There should be throughout the entire discourse nothing dead, but every part should be full of life pouring itself forth through the common trunk—the theme—and vitalizing the whole.

2. The brevity of the subject with respect to its thought is an important quality of the substance of a theme, for on it depends in no small degree the efficiency of a sermon. A discourse, though constructed in conformity to every other principle of homiletics, yet if it be without a brief extent

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of theme, will make little impression on an audience. Let us, then, notice brevity of thought in a subject in its relation both to the text and to the sermon.

(1.) Brevity of a thought in a theme as related to the text requires that only so much of the thought in the text be selected for the subject as can be properly developed in the discourse. Great care should be given to this point, for if the theme be of great extent, an attempt to do it justice in a sermon, will either protract the discourse beyond proper bounds, or will make it a mere synopsis.

(2.) Brevity of thought in a theme as related to the sermon tends (*a.*) to make a discourse original. For it compels the preacher to go beneath the surface of his theme for the materials of his discourse. The amount of original materials which lie hidden under a very limited extent of theme is frequently surprising. Often one must dig deep for an abundance of shining ore.

Brevity of thought in a theme also tends (*b.*) to make a discourse impressive. The impressiveness of a sermon results scarcely more from the originality of the thoughts contained in it, than from the prominence, and the clear exhibition given to the thoughts. A sermon which contains but a single fruitful thought well developed and illustrated, will have a power over an audience that a discourse containing several such thoughts cannot gain. For men can be moved by a thought adapted to affect

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them, only as they perceive it. And the more clearly they see it, the more powerfully will it move them. If it stand forth like the sun, it will have the sun's power. Hence a preacher who takes one such thought for his theme, and sets it before his hearers with fertility of illustration, will make an impression upon them, which he would utterly fail to make, should he attempt to set before them several such thoughts. In the one case, the audience will go away with a single thought pervading their minds—towering with sharp outline before their mental vision, as some lone Alpine mountain towers before a traveler; in the other, they will depart as little impressed with any of the truths to which they have listened, as the same traveler would be, by any of the numerous peaks which rise to nearly equal height in an Alpine range. Let a preacher, therefore, remember that to the same degree in which he enlarges his theme, he diminishes his power.

Moreover, brevity of thought in a subject tends (c.) to give variety in preaching. For each sermon will then be but the development of a single truth, and such fruitful ideas—the germs of sermons—lie scattered throughout the Bible as thickly as pebbles on the sea-shore. The preacher who takes the course here recommended, will not weary his people with endless repetitions of the same round of topics, but will have something new, interesting,

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and instructive every Sabbath. He will find the Scriptures a mine of wealth which he can never exhaust. The more he works it, the more it will yield, and from the crushing of the quartz, he will bring forth the fine gold to his people. The opposite method produces the most sterile kind of preaching. A young minister after preaching twenty-five sermons found his occupation gone, for he had gone over the whole body of divinity!

IV. The announcement of the subject.

1. To the inquiry whether or not the subject of a sermon should be formally stated to the audience, it may be answered that in topical discourses it should generally be formally announced. For,

(1.) Its announcement is consistent with the teachings of the great masters in secular rhetoric and oratory. Aristotle, as we have seen, makes the statement of the subject an essential part of every oration, and the great orators of antiquity constructed their orations in conformity to these teachings. Thus Demosthenes in his "Oration on the Crown," after making his exordium, requested to have the indictment read in open court, and then proceeded to reply to the charges contained in it. So also Cicero in his great speech on the Mithridatic war, after his introduction, proposed to speak of "the nature of the war, its magnitude, and the choice of a commander."

(2.) Its announcement is consistent with mod

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ern practice in judicial and deliberative oratory. The lawyer, whether arguing a point of law before the Bench, or addressing the jury, first clearly states the position which he designs to defend. In the deliberative assembly, the orator speaks to a motion, or a resolution read before the meeting, and this does away with the necessity of a formal announcement of the subject in the body of his speech. Now there is no such essential difference between secular and sacred oratory, as to render the announcement of the subject important in the former case, and not in the latter. Indeed, owing to the peculiar nature and circumstances of sacred discourse, a distinct statement of the subject is much more important than in secular oratory. For,

(3.) Its announcement is required by the nature of the truths presented. Generally they are abstract truths—truths which lie without the range of ordinary thinking,—and hence need to be distinctly stated in order to be firmly held by the mind. In this respect, they differ widely from the ordinary topics which are discussed in the court-room, and in the legislative hall. There truths mostly appear as facts in concrete forms—they take on body and life—and thus are easily recognized by the mind.

(4.) Its announcement is required by the circumstances in which the truths are presented. These

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circumstances are entirely different from those which attend judicial and deliberative oratory. The audience that throng a court-room, have come together to hear pleadings on a particular case well-known to them, and in which they have become deeply interested. Hence, they do not need to have the case formally stated, in order to call forth their interest, or hold their attention to the question at issue. In like manner, in a deliberative assembly, the orator usually speaks to a resolution or proposition previously known to the audience, and for which, therefore, they are prepared. But the pulpit orator has none of these circumstances to aid him. The people to whom he ministers, usually assemble on the Sabbath without the remotest idea of the particular truth which he is to present to them. They know only that it will doubtless be one of the multitude of doctrines and precepts contained in the Bible. Hence an explicit and formal statement seems to be needed, in order that the truth which he designs to develop, may come distinctly before their minds. Hence, as we might infer,

(5.) Its announcement is consistent with the practice of the most effective preachers in every age of the church. A slight acquaintance with the history of the pulpit is sufficient to convince one on this point. In every period of the Christian church, the men who, under God, have been the

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most successful preachers, have been noted for the distinctness with which they have set forth the themes of their discourses. It was thus with such preachers as Luther and Calvin, Saurin and Baxter, Edwards and Robert Hall, Mason and Bushnell. With them, a sermon was not so much writing—without visible head or method. It was the systematic development of a single truth of God, a truth all instinct with divine life, and made to tower before the sinner, until he felt its power coming upon him, and subduing him.

2. The forms of the announcement. The form in which the theme of a sermon is set forth, includes two particulars—the form of the substance of the subject, and the form of its expression.

(1.) The form of the substance of the subject. A theme may be thrown into either of two forms, viz., into a categorical statement having a subject, a copula, and a predicate, as "God is love," "The Word was God," or into a statement without predication, as, "The love of God," "The Divinity of the Word." The first form of statement is termed by rhetoricians, a "logical proposition" and is the expression of a judgment, the second is styled a "rhetorical proposition" and is simply the expression of a fact. Each of these forms has peculiar advantages. Let us notice some of them.

The logical form of the subject is better adapted (*a.*) to give to a preacher materials. Shut within

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the walls of a categorical proposition, which he has undertaken to defend, he is obliged to cast about on every side for the materials of defence. He is now put to his best, he has taken his position, and he cannot retreat. He must hold it, or he can gain no power over his auditors. He must convince them that his proposition is true, before he can gain control of their hearts and wills. This necessity compels him to search diligently for materials, and the proposition itself indicates where he may find these materials. Suppose, for example, he selects as his text, James i. 15, "And the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death," and educes from it the logical proposition that "Sin produces death." Now, in searching for arguments with which to maintain his position, he would naturally look for them along the line of the proposition itself. He would ask, "By what means can I defend this proposition?" And his search along this line of inquiry would be apt to lead him on to the discovery and accumulation of materials suitable to his purpose. Such rigid search in a single direction rarely fails to bring to light large masses of rough materials, which can be advantageously wrought into the sermon. On the other hand, suppose the preacher throws his theme, taken from the same text, into the rhetorical form, thus,—"Death as the final result of sin." In casting about, now, for the materials of his discourse, he is no longer,

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as before, shut up to one line of thought and argument, but can look over the entire field inclosed by the boundaries of the theme, and inspect any part of it. He is not called to prove anything. He may speak of the causes of this universal law, or of its evidences, or of its terrible effects on the individual and the race, or of its manifold relations to other revealed truths; and it would not be strange, if, in treating the subject in this discursive manner, he should find himself in possession rather of paucity of materials, than of abundance.

The logical form of the subject is also better adapted (*b.*) to give to a discourse unity. The preacher has a single definite object before him—to prove his proposition. Everything, now, serves to hold him true to his object, as he advances through his discourse. His purpose guides and controls his search for materials. It acts as a magnet, attracting to itself only the materials suitable to the sermon. The proposition itself also greatly aids him. For his purpose has taken a body, and now stands before him with finger pointing to the goal toward which he is striving. His audience, too, helps to keep him true to his purpose. He has, in a sense, entered on a contest with his hearers. He knows they will watch him closely, and hold him to what he has undertaken, and this knowledge will cause him to inspect carefully every argument which he advances. Hence a discourse produced from a theme in the

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form of a logical proposition will be more likely to have unity in all its parts, than one produced from a theme in the rhetorical form of statement.

The logical statement of the subject is also better adapted (*c.*) to give to a discourse impressiveness. So far as a sermon in itself is concerned, its power depends both on the nature of the thoughts, and on the manner in which they are set forth. With a given degree of perfection in manner of expression, the impressiveness of a discourse will vary as the degree of unity in the thoughts of which it is composed, varies. If the thoughts are homogeneous,—if they have a like origin, and lead directly to one result—they will give to the sermon a power which it could not have, were it composed of thoughts not so closely linked together, however valuable they might be. It is the chain-shot which does most execution. The logical form of the theme sometimes assumes the interrogative form of statement, as, for example, "Will the finally impenitent be punished forever?" This is best when the other form of statement would be likely to arouse the prejudice of your hearers against your proposition. You now affirm nothing, but simply lead them into the investigation of the theme, and should you also bring them out into a conviction of its truth, you may then in the conclusion of your sermon, throw your theme into the affirmative form. Having thus far looked at certain

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advantages of the logical form of the subject, let us now notice some of those arising from the rhetorical form of a theme.

The rhetorical form of the subject is better adapted (*a.*) to give to a preacher variety of materials. This is, you perceive, quite different from amount of materials, as there may be a large mass of materials with little variety. Now it is, at times, and with some subjects, very desirable that a preacher have a wider range of materials, than he can have, when shut within the walls of a logical form of statement. At times, it is desirable that he come forth into the open plain, and looking at his subject from various stand-points, present these different views to his audience. This he can do in a variety of ways without violating the principle of unity of subject.

The rhetorical statement of a theme is also better adapted (*b.*) to give to certain truths an appropriate exhibition. There are many truths of the sacred Scriptures which ought rarely, if ever, to be presented in a sermon in a logical form. There are many truths which need no demonstration. There are, too, truths whose beauty and sweetness would be well-nigh crushed out of them were they forced into such a form.

The rhetorical statement of the proposition is often better adapted (*c.*) to give to an audience interest in the discourse. There are many truths

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a demonstration of each of which will not interest auditors nearly so much as some one view of such truth, some practical truth which it may suggest. Already convinced of these truths, they will listen with little interest and attention to labored argumentation in defence of them, but will readily give their attention to one who proposes to point out the relations which these truths sustain to them. The question, then, arises: How shall a preacher know when it is best to throw his subject into the logical, and when into the rhetorical form? To this inquiry no definite answer, which shall hold in every case, can be given. The preacher must decide in each instance from a consideration of the nature of his subject, and the character of his audience. There are subjects, as has been remarked, which can rarely be properly treated in the logical form, there are others which ought not to be thus treated before certain audiences. A preacher, therefore, in deciding on the form which his theme should take, must look not only at what the nature of the subject requires, but also at what the character of his audience demands, and in the light of both he will rarely fail to come to a right decision. (This shows how important it is for a preacher to know his people.)

(2.) Advancing now to the form of the expression of the theme, notice that the subject should be announced (*a.*) in the clearest language possible.

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The absolute necessity of perspicuity in a theme is evident from the fact that if the subject of a sermon is not understood by the hearers, the sermon itself becomes enigmatical to them. Not knowing from what point they start, they will probably recognize neither the road along which they are conducted, nor the point to which they are brought. Hence there should be in a theme no words that may need explanation. Such are technical terms which, however familiar to ordinary hearers, are clearly understood by but few of them. Even the common terms of theology most used in the pulpit, are less fully apprehended by the people than ministers are wont to suppose. The statement of a theme should be so simple both in word and in structure, that the thought shall shine through it as clearly as the sun through the atmosphere.

The subject should also generally be announced (*b.*) in literal language.

If the thought in the text is set forth in figurative terms, it should be reduced to a literal expression in the theme, unless the figure has become so familiar as either not to suggest its original meaning, or not to need explanation. Examples of the former frequently occur in conversation and in writing. We do not think of the figure we use, when we say that "The wind blows," and we meet with a pleasant surprise, when Shakespeare com-

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pletes the figure for us, in the mouth of King Lear —"Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks!"

When our Saviour reminds us that our Father in heaven "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good," we do not think of the figure he is using. At times, also, the figure employed is so familiar and well understood, as not to need a literal expression in the theme. But generally the figure used is such that a literal expression should be given to it in the subject. Thus Saurin, in discoursing on the text, "For our God is a consuming fire," Heb. xii. 29, reduces the thought contained in the figure to the following form—"The severity of God."[1] Thus, also, Chalmers, on the words, "The light of the body is the eye, if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be ful. of light," Matt. vi. 22, announces as his theme—"The connection between Singleness of Aim, and Spiritual Discernment."[2]

Also the subject should be announced (*c.*) in modest language. There should be no appearance of a desire to startle hearers by setting forth a theme in bold, paradoxical, or antithetical terms. No expressions of this kind should be used, unless the nature of the text manifestly requires it.

Again, the subject should be announced (*d.*) in brief language. The brevity with which a theme can be expressed, depends largely on the nature

[1] Vol. I., Ser. 9. [2] Chalmer's Works. Vol. III., Ser. 20.

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of the thought, but in all cases, the more briefly a subject can be announced consistently with perspicuity, the better. For the shorter it is, the more easily it can be retained by the memory.

Moreover the subject should be announced (*e.*) with a prefatory remark. It should be introduced with some form of expression, which shall indicate to your audience that you are about to announce your theme. This will direct attention to it, so that all will be more likely to notice, and remember it.

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LECTURE X.

THE DIVISION—DEFINITION—DESIGN—OBJECTIONS - ADVANTAGES.

I. The division in a sermon is that part of it by which the thought contained in the subject is set forth in separate heads. The theme, as before remarked, may not improperly be compared to the trunk of a tree whose branches correspond to the divisions of the subject. The main divisions grow directly out of the subject, and the subdivisions—if any—spring directly from the main divisions.

II. The design of division in a sermon is to increase the power of a truth over hearers by impressing it upon them more deeply and permanently than could otherwise be done. Whether or not such a result be promoted by a proper division of a subject, is a question which will hereafter be discussed. On one point—the importance of making out a full plan of a sermon before beginning to compose it—there is, so far as I know, but one opinion among those whose judgment on this subject is worthy of consideration. They all agree

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that a discourse developed from a plan previously wrought out, and adjusted in all its parts in accordance with the principles of homiletics, will have a power which it would not possess, were it not constructed on such a plan. Assuming, then, the necessity of forming, at least, in the mind, a full plan of a sermon before beginning to compose it, I shall now consider some objections to the announcement of such plan in a sermon, and some advantages arising from it.

III. The objections to an evident division in sermons.

1. An obvious division, it is alleged, tends to destroy unity. This is a grave charge, and, if sustained, is fatal to the use of an evident division. For if a sermon be destitute of unity, whatever other excellence it may have, it will fall almost powerless on an audience. It can make no single and so no deep impression. It becomes, therefore, very important to ascertain whether or not an obvious division in a discourse does tend to destroy its unity. The charge is made by high authority. Fénelon, in the second of his Dialogues on Eloquence, while highly approving of order and arrangement, affirms that in a discourse in which there is a manifest division, "there is no real unity of subject, but it is two or three discourses on different subjects, joined together by a purely arbitrary link. The sermons of to-day, yesterday, and the day be-

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fore, provided only they are part of a course, as much make a whole and complete discourse, as the three heads of one of these sermons make a whole between them."[1] But it may be replied, that an obvious division in a sermon is not necessarily more inconsistent with its unity, than is the division of a tree into branches, or of a human body into different members, at variance with its unity. The objection seems founded on a misconception of the nature of division in a sermon, as if it were of necessity arbitrary, each head requiring a development at variance with the others. But if the plan be a natural one, its statement in the sermon will also be natural, so that each part of the division will be complementary to the other parts, and all required in order to make up the whole. Thus a development of each division is not a development of as many distinct themes, but of the one idea of the subject. One might as well say, that the development of the different branches of an apple-tree is a development of as many different kinds of apples. If the plan be a good one, each division will prepare the way for its successor, and fitly introduce it. There will be between the close of the discussion of one division and the beginning of the development of the next, no chasm across which the hearers cannot leap, but each division will fol low its predecessor naturally and fitly. Such a di

[1] Page 119.

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vision tends to promote, and not to destroy the impression of unity in a discourse, for it clearly shows the audience that the subject has developed itself—has rounded itself out—in these divisions, which, had they been developed without announcement, might have been taken for different subjects. Fénelon, in objecting to obvious divisions in sermons, seems to have had in view a kind of division prevalent and popular before his day,—a division both artificial and minute. (For example, three main heads after the Trinity; four main heads after the four Evangelists; seven main heads after the sacred number; twelve main heads after the twelve apostles; etc.)

2. An obvious division, it is said, gives formality to a sermon. The author just now quoted, remarks, that "divisions render a discourse dry and stiff, by cutting it up in two or three parts, in such a way, that they interrupt the speaker unfavorably, and hinder the effect he wishes to produce."[1] But this objection holds against an artificial, and not against a natural division, for reasons above given.

3. An obvious division in a sermon, it is said, checks the progress of emotion in the hearers, and thus hinders the effect designed to be produced. It throws up, as it were, barricades along the path of the discourse, which the hearers must surmount before they can reach the end of their journey.

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But an obvious division, when natural, must promote rather than hinder the progress of emotion, since it assists the intellect to perceive more clearly and fully a thought by which it is to be affected. Emotion must follow perception, and the more clearly and vividly one apprehends a truth fitted to produce emotion, the more deeply will his emotional nature be excited in view of it. If the thought can be made to stand before him radiant with light, he will be melted before it. Hence that form of presentation by which a truth can be made to stand forth most vividly before the intellect, is the form of presentation best fitted to excite the emotional nature. Now it is claimed that an obvious division can be made greatly to promote such a presentation. Each successive part of such a division, instead of obstructing the progress of the intellect, assists it to arrive more speedily at a clear and full apprehension of the subject. The divisions rise out of the discourse like stairs out of a stair-case, each successive division aiding rather than retarding the ascent of the intellect from the subject to the conclusion. The other method is like going up a bare pole.

4. An obvious division in a sermon is alleged to be at variance with models in ancient oratory. Let us hear again the Archbishop of Cambray. "The orations of these great men" (Demosthenes and Cicero) "are not divided as our modern ser

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mons are, and not only did not they, but neither did Isocrates, nor any of the ancient orators, adopt this method. The fathers of the church, in like manner, knew nothing of it. St. Bernard, the last of them, often notices divisions; but he does not follow them, nor does he, in fact, divide his sermons. Long after his time men preached without divisions; they are, in short, a very modern invention, derived from the schools."[1]

But if the assertion that the masters in ancient oratory did not use an evident division, could be fully sustained, it would not be a conclusive argument against the employment of such a division in sacred discourse. For there may exist such a radical difference between these two species of discourse, and the circumstances which attend them, as to make an evident division important in the one, and not in the other. In ancient oratory, the aim of an orator was the production of immediate action in the hearers—an immediate decision by the court, or the people. Now, though an obvious division would, of itself, promote this result, yet because of the prejudice then existing against any appearance of study in an oration, those masters alike of speech and of human nature seemed often to have thought it best to forego the benefit resulting from an evident division, for the sake of gaining their end more surely. But when they gave

[1] Page 120.

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up an obvious division, they made their plans come as near the surface as possible, and not make the divisions prominent. In sacred discourse, however, the production of emotion and action is often not the immediate object. It is often to inform the understanding—to give correct views of truth as a basis of action in the future. Discourses of this kind may require an evident division not only to assist the understanding to apprehend a truth more fully, but also the memory to retain it.

But the assertion that the ancient orators did not divide their orations in an obvious manner, cannot be fully sustained. Some of their most effective speeches contain not only a manifest division, but also a clear announcement of the main heads at the very opening of the oration. For proof, I refer you again to Cicero's celebrated "Oration for the Manilian Law." After a brief exordium and narration, the orator thus proceeds at once to state his subject, and its main divisions:—

"You see what the case is, now consider what ought to be done. First, it seems proper that I should speak respecting the nature of the war, secondly, of its magnitude, then, concerning the commander that should be chosen."[1]

[1] "Primùm mihi videtur de genere belli, deinde de magnitudine, tum de imperatore deligendo, esse dicendum."—*Oratio pro Lege Manilia* Sec. II.

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Here we have as obvious and formal a division as could well be given. Moreover, throughout the entire speech there is the most complete and clearly announced division. Each successive head is felicitously introduced by a recapitulation of the heads previously discussed. We have, then, in one of the best orations of the great Roman orator, a division as manifest as is usually found in modern sermons. Other orations of the same master contain a division nearly as conspicuous. If, now, we turn to the greatest oration of the ablest orator of antiquity, we find in this "Oration for the Crown" a division which, though not stated in its main heads at the beginning of the speech, is clearly given in its several parts in the progress of the oration. Thus the orator replies, first, to the charges foreign to the indictment, relating both to his public and private life, and, secondly, to the charges contained in the indictment.

5. An obvious division in a sermon is affirmed to be at variance with models in modern secular oratory. The assertion is sometimes made that the ablest orators of modern times have not made distinct divisions in their speeches.

To this objection it might be replied—as to the last—that if the position could be sustained, it would not be a conclusive argument against the expediency of using prominent divisions in sacred discourse. But the assertion cannot be fully sus-

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tained. It can be shown that some of the ablest orators of modern times have constructed their speeches on plans visible throughout the different parts of their orations. If they have not announced the main heads of the division at the beginning of their speeches, they have usually announced distinctly each head before entering on its development. For proof, I refer you to the celebrated speech of Edmund Burke on "Conciliation with America" (delivered in the House of Commons, March 22, 1775), which Sir James Mackintosh pronounced "the most faultless of Mr. Burke's productions." After an appropriate introduction, he thus boldly and briefly states his subject, "The proposition is peace," which, having clearly defined, he goes on at once to announce the two main divisions under which he is to discuss his proposition, thus: "The capital, leading questions on which you must this day decide, are these two: First, whether you ought to concede; and secondly, what your concession ought to be." These two chief divisions he then proceeds to discuss in order under distinct, and often formally announced sub-divisions. Thus much for a clearly marked division in the best oration of one of the ablest of modern orators. I might also point you to a division almost as distinct in the great speech of Mr. Sheridan in the celebrated trial of Warren Hastings, but it is unnecessary to multiply examples which are to be

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found in so many of the speeches of able modern orators.

IV. The advantages of an evident division in sermons.

A clearly marked division has certain advantages for both the preacher and the hearers. The chief advantages of an evident division to the preacher are the following:

1. A division which is to be made apparent aids the preacher to give unity to his sermon. If he is composing it on a plan which is to be concealed—to which he is not to commit himself before his audience—he will be apt now and then to deviate more or less from his plan, to bring in stealthily materials which have no place within its limits, and hence, though his plan may have been made in accordance with the principles of unity, he will be liable to produce a sermon which will not possess it in so high a degree as if he had made his division prominent. But if he is to commit himself openly to his plan, he will constantly feel the pressure of many motives to make him adhere to it in the composition of his discourse, so that he will be more likely to develop each part into unity with the whole.

2. A division which is to be made apparent also aids the preacher to give symmetry to his sermon. If he does not intend to announce his plan, he will, at times, be sorely tempted to take liberties with

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it, in the way of unduly expanding thoughts contained in some parts of it, and neglecting to develop properly thoughts included in other parts. Having it all his own way, he will often be tempted to dwell unnecessarily on those parts of the subject to which he is partial, and perhaps, barely notice the other parts. But if he commits himself openly to a plan, this fact will operate as a motive to counteract any such partiality which he may be inclined to indulge, and will thus tend to keep him true to the symmetrical development of his subject.

3. An obvious division assists the preacher to keep before his hearers the subject of his sermon. A discourse may have been composed in conformity to a good plan, and yet may fail to produce its proper effect, mainly because the subject does not so shine through the different parts, as to be continually before the hearers. In a well constructed sermon, the thought in the theme ought to stand out before the audience like the sun in a cloudless day, not obscured for one moment, but continually pouring down its full light and heat. Now a clearly marked division tends to keep the subject constantly before the hearer. Each part of the division points back to it, and recalls it to his mind. He is thus brought to stand in its presence, and to feel its power.

4. Again, an obvious division aids a preacher to keep before his hearers the thread of his dis

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course. The preacher who develops a truth from a plan which is concealed, will often find it difficult to keep his hearers advancing along the line of his discourse. Like men endeavoring to follow an indistinct trail over the prairies, they will often lose the path, and wandering hither and thither, will rarely find their way back to the path of the discourse. The obvious divisions of a well constructed plan are so many guide-boards to keep the hearer in the path along which the preacher would have him advance. From the absence of these way-marks along the line of the development of a truth, a few, and those the most intelligent of an audience, may experience little inconvenience, but it should be remembered that most audiences are largely made up of those not accustomed to follow lengthy and hidden trains of thought, and hence need to be led along a well defined road.

Let us now notice, in part, the advantages of an evident division to the hearer.

1. An obvious division aids a hearer to apprehend the thought of a sermon. The thought with its arrangement is the only force which a discourse of itself possesses. The sermon has in itself no other means of gaining power over a hearer. Without thought, a division, however manifest, will be impotent. But the thought must be apprehended by a hearer before he will be affected by it. He must stand with it face to face, before

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he will be convinced, or moved by it. Now an obvious division tends to this result by keeping the subject distinctly before the hearer. Each part of a well constructed division points backward as well as forward, so that at each successive stage in his progress, the hearer is brought to an eminence from which he can look both back to the point from which he started, and forward along the road on which he is advancing. Throughout the discourse, the subject is distinctly before him, and hence its development is not rendered obscure by reason of any obscuration of the theme.

But a clearly marked division not only keeps distinctly before a hearer the subject throughout the discourse, but also the subject as it appears at each successive stage of its development. It enables him to see clearly the process of growth at every advance, so that when he comes to the maturity of the development, the entire process throughout its successive stages lies open to his view. Who cannot see that the thought thus developed throughout a discourse will be apprehended more easily and fully than when not thus developed?

2. An obvious division also aids a hearer to remember the thought of a sermon. Sacred oratory, as has been observed, is unlike other species of oratory in that it often does not aim to produce an immediate and single act in the hearer, but a

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series of acts extending through a lifetime. But this series of right acts will continue only so long as the man shall stand in the presence of the truth which impelled him to the first act of the series. Hence it is of great importance that the truth set forth by the pulpit be so presented—brought forward in such a form—that it shall remain fixed in the memory. Now, a well arranged, prominent division gives us such a form, at once clear, and easily retained in the memory. If, then, such are the advantages of an evident division in a sermon, it would seem that, with other things equal, a discourse which gives the hearers an easy possession of its plan, will be the most effective.

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LECTURE XI.

THE DIVISION—GROUND—RULES—EXTENT—ORDER—ANNOUNCEMENT—FORM.

V. The ground or principle of the division in the development of the subject of a sermon, lies in the design in such development. The end in view should always give law to the division. For example, suppose I take for a text, Heb. vii. 25, "Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him," and deduce from it, as the subject of my discourse, the proposition—Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour. If, now, it is my object to prove this statement to those who may be disposed to doubt or deny it, I shall make a division in accordance with this design; but if it is my intention simply to illustrate the all-sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour, I shall make quite a different division. Again, suppose I select for a text, Rom. ii. 4, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not know

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ing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" and take as my subject—The goodness of God toward men is adapted to lead them tc repentance. If, now, assuming the truth of the proposition, I wish to show the philosophy of this divine method of producing repentance—its perfect adaptation to the nature of man,—I shall form a division quite distinct from that which I should make, were it my purpose to prove the proposition. If such, however, were my purpose, it would be better to throw the subject into a rhetorical form; thus,—The goodness of God toward men, as adapted to lead them to repentance. Or, again, suppose the text is taken from the first Epistle of John, v. 4, "And this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith," and there is deduced from it the proposition—Faith overcomes the world. I shall make one of three distinct plans on this truth, according as it is my object to dwell mainly on the grammatical subject, the copula, or the predicate. If it is my design to develop the nature of this faith which overcomes the world, I shall conform my general theme and plan to this object, and speak of—The Nature of a victorious Faith: if to establish the proposition that faith does overcome the world, I shall make another plan; and if to set forth the way in which faith achieves the victory, I shall form a plan quite different from the others.

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The design, then, should always control the division. Hence the forming of a plan before fixing definitely on the end to be attained, is as puerile, as would be the framing of a building before deciding on the object of its erection.

VI. The rules of the division.

1. A division should embrace all the materials which are to be used in the development of a subject. A violation of this rule will produce one or the other of two results:—either,

(1.) The division will be compelled to admit materials foreign to itself; or,

(2.) The division will be compelled to add to itself in order to include such foreign materials.

Either of these results will do violence to the unity, the symmetry, and the effect of the sermon. For if, through want of foresight while making the division, there must be pressed into it materials that cannot with propriety be placed under any of its heads—which do not grow out of any parts of the division,—then it is evident that both the unity, and the symmetry of the discourse must be impaired, and hence, also, its effect. But if, on the other hand, a preacher as he advances in his sermon, becoming aware of a defective division, attempts to remedy it by adding other heads to embrace the materials which his defective division had left out, he will be very apt to find that, while by such an addition, he has saved these ma

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terials, he has ruined his plan, so that it needs to be taken in pieces, and re-adjusted in order to have unity, and symmetry. Hence it becomes very important that a division should be made in full view of the main body of the materials which are to be used in the sermon.

2. A division should embrace no more materials than are necessary to a proper development of a subject. Hence a division should be made to include only the materials needed to sustain that part of the general subject, which is to be made the topic of the discourse. A division should include not all the thoughts which cluster around the words of the subject, but only that of the proposition—the particular thought which is to be the theme of the sermon. It was the attempt to exhaust the subject in all its relations, that led John Howe and contemporaneous divines to write such interminable sermons on a single text, which exhausted, at once, both their subject, and the patience of their hearers.[1]

3. A division should have its principal heads co ordinate. They all should be of equal rank. Hence no one should be contained or implied in another. It would be, in form, a violation of this rule to place among the chief divisions a head representing a genus, and another a species, or one

[1] John Howe has fourteen sermons on the five words, "We are saved by hope." Rom. viii. 24.

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a species and another an individual. If for good reasons such a division is made, each head should be developed only so far as it differs from the others. They should each be discussed as if they were co-ordinate.

4. The rules given for the chief divisions are equally applicable to the divisions (if any) of each principal head. Each division then becomes the theme, of which the sub-divisions are the main heads. The principles which have been laid down, are deemed sufficient guides to a correct division, but it may be well to add another virtually included in the rules already given.

5. An artificial method of division should be avoided. No division which is artificial can be a proper one through which to develop a subject, for if it be true that each divine thought has a form of its own, into which it seeks to develop itself, then it must be also true, that no form of division but that which grows naturally out of a subject is a good one by means of which to develop it. Hence an artificial method of division hinders, rather than promotes a good development of a thought. The following are methods of division most likely to be artificial, though far from being always so.

The scholastic method of division consists of three main heads, setting forth respectively the nature of the grammatical subject, of the gram-

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matical predicate, and of the copula, or connection of the two. Thus the text, 1 John v. 4, "For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world," would be scholastically divided in the following manner: I. Who are they that are "born of God"? II. What is meant by "overcoming the world"? III. Show the certainty that those who are born of God will overcome the world. So also in a discourse founded on the gospel of John i. 1, "In the beginning was the Word," the scholastic division would be this: I. The nature of "the Word"; II. The nature of "the beginning"; III. Show that the Word was in the beginning. Now there may be texts which require this form of division—texts difficult of explanation,—but they are comparatively few, and when this form is not required, it should be carefully avoided. It is a form of division easily made, and one is apt to slide into it, and to continue in it, unless on his guard.

The textual method of division is suggested by the words of a text. In the textual form of division there is usually no formal proposition, out of which the division proceeds, as in the topical discourse, but the theme is introduced in several main heads which, taken together, make up the general subject. Sometimes, however, the proposition is stated as formally as in a topical sermon, but develops itself through divisions sug-

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gested by the words of the text. Thus Pres. Edwards, in a discourse on Acts xvii. 31, "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained," announces as the doctrine of the text:—"There is a day coming in which there will be a general righteous judgment of the whole world, by Jesus Christ;" which he proceeds to develop textually, by showing that "God will judge the world; that he will judge it on an appointed day; that he will judge it in righteousness; and that he will judge it by the Lord Jesus Christ."[1]

Frequently textual discourse cannot be said to have strict unity of subject, but approaches more nearly to a running commentary on the passage. The texts which are susceptible of this method of division are numerous, and oftentimes this form is the best which can be found through which to develop a subject. But since the textual division is founded not so much upon the thought, as upon the structure which contains the thought, its use is apt tc lead one into a superficial or fanciful method of division, and treatment of subject. Thus the Rev. William Arnot, in Sermon X. in his volume of sermons entitled, "The Anchor of the Soul," from the text, Ps. xlviii. 3: "God is known in her palaces for a refuge,"—makes the following fanciful division:

[1] Edwards' Works, Vol. IV., Ser. 8.

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"I. God.

"II. God is.

"III. God is known.

"IV. God is known in her

"V. God is known in her palaces.

"VI. God is known in her palaces for a refuge."

This is to be said in favor of the textual form, that where it can be properly employed, it is a desirable form of division from the fact of being so easily remembered by the people. Thus Mr. Arnot gives us in Sermon VI. of his volume, a fine example of a natural and easily remembered textual division of Philippians iv. 6: "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." His division is as follows:

"I. Let your requests be made known unto God.

"II. By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.

"III. In everything."

VII. The extent to which division in a sermon should be carried, must be determined in view of the subject, the audience, and the occasion.

1. The extent of division as limited by the subject. The more difficult a subject, the more needful is an extended division. For division, as has been shown, assists the hearer to apprehend the thought of a discourse. Hence a doctrinal sermon generally requires a minute division. For

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example, the doctrine of election could not be thoroughly discussed in any other manner; and the same might be said of all truths which require for their elucidation minute distinctions. Hence also preceptive discourses do not generally need a minute division. A sermon inculcating the duty of repentance, of prayer, of temperance, and the like, does not call for a very full division.

2. The extent of division as limited by the audience. The more uneducated an audience, the more needful is a brief division. While a well constructed division, if composed of few heads, would aid such an audience to get at the thought, an extended division, by distracting the mind with many particulars, would tend to defeat this end. Hence an extended division, which might be of much service to a highly intelligent audience, would be injurious to one made up of illiterate persons.

3. The extent of division as limited by the occasion. Often the occasion itself determines the extent to which a division should be carried, by determining the extent of the development of a subject. There are occasions which give great latitude of development to a subject, and so permit, and often require, an ample division; there are other occasions which furnish a very limited time for the discussion, and hence do not permit an extended division. A general rule comprising the results which have been reached may be thus stated

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A division should comprise as few heads as the subject, the audience, and the occasion will permit.

VIII. The order of the division.

Especial reference is now had to the order of arranging the main heads of division, though the same order will apply in most cases, to the arrangement of sub-divisions, if any. There are different principles of arrangement, the chief of which I purpose now simply to indicate.

1. The order of causal succession. For example, in a discourse founded on the Epistle of James, i. 15: "Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death," one would naturally speak, in order, of lust as causing sin, and then of sin as producing death.

2. The order of logical succession. This is an arrangement of the parts of a division according to their logical dependence, and with the view to convince the understanding.

3. The order of rhetorical succession. This is an arrangement of the parts of a division according to their rhetorical dependence, mainly with the view to affect the heart, and the will.

A fine example of this order of division is seen in a sermon by President Woolsey on "The Self-Propagating Power of Sin," from the text, Prov. v. 22, "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins;" in which are successively set forth, the di-

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rect power of sin to propagate itself in the individual soul; its tendency to produce moral blindness; to benumb and root out the sensibilities; to cripple the power of the will to undertake a reform; and to propagate itself by means of the tendency of men to associate with persons of like character, and to avoid the company of persons of an opposite character.[1]

4. The order of importance. For example, in a discourse on temperance, from the text, 2 Peter i. 6, "And in your knowledge temperance," I should naturally speak of the effect of temperance, first on the body, and then on the soul.

5. The order of genus and species. This method of division, though faulty in form, is allowable when the heads are so discussed that the development of one does not include that of another. For example, Dr. Thomas Guthrie, in discoursing on Col. i. 12:—"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;" makes the following division:

"I. Heaven is an inheritance.

"II. Heaven is a heritage of free grace.

"III. The heirs of heaven require to be made meet for the inheritance.

"IV. As heaven is the gift of God, our meetness for it is the work of God."[2] Here we have a

[1] "The Religion of the Present, and of the Future," Ser. V.

[2] "Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints," Ser. I.

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constant descent from genus to species, which will become more apparent, if we reduce these heads to a more simple and uniform statement, thus;—

"I. Heaven is an inheritance.

"II. Heaven is a free inheritance.

"III. Heaven is a free inheritance for those made meet for it.

"IV. Heaven is a free inheritance for those made meet for it by the grace of God."

But while this division transgresses the rule in form, it conforms to it in reality, for each head is so developed as not to intrude on its neighbors.

6. The order of time.

7. The order of place, either of approach, or departure.

Thus Robert Hall, in his celebrated sermon entitled, "Reflections on War," from the text, Ps. xlvi. 8, 9, "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth," etc., in which he considers war in two aspects,—as a source of misery, and as a source of crimes—thus brings forward the various points to illustrate the first division of his theme,—viz., war as a source of misery,—following the order of departure, though not stating the points formally.

War is a source of misery.—

(1.) To those who unprepared perish in battle.

(2.) To those left to die a lingering death.

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(3.) To the inhabitants of those parts of the hostile countries, which are the scene of hostilities.

(4.) To the inhabitants of those parts of the hostile countries which are removed from the scene of hostilities.

(5.) To the inhabitants of those countries not engaged in the war.[1]

The above are the chief methods of arranging the heads of the division. Which order a preacher should select, will of course depend on the nature of his theme.

IX. The announcement of the division.

1. The prominence of the announcement. The general principle is, that the more abstruse a subject is, the more need there is of a prominent announcement of the division. It is often well, also, in discourses on difficult themes, to give immediately after the statement of the subject, the main divisions which you intend to develop. This gives to the hearer a general view of the road along which he is to be conducted, so that he will see the direction in which he is going, and will be put at his ease, while at the same time his curiosity to inspect the scenery along the road will be in no wise abated. In such case, however, the chief divisions should not be numerically given. It is well in like manner to recapitulate the chief divisions at the close of the devel

[1] Hall's Works, Vol. I., p. 59.

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opment whenever the effect of the sermon would be promoted by such recapitulation. But there are many topics of which the pulpit treats, which do not require so prominent and formal a division for their proper development. Such are biographical, historical, and illustrative discourses generally. One's own judgment must in each instance determine the degree of prominence which he should give to his division.

2. The form of the announcement.

The chief heads of division should be announced:

(1.) In exact language. The naked thought, and nothing more, should be set forth.

(2.) In clear language. The expression should be so transparent that the thought it contains shall alone be visible. Hence there should be no double expressions, no explanatory words thrown in.

(3.) In concise language. This is all-important, for without conciseness the chief object of the statement of the heads in a discourse will be defeated.

(4.) In similar language. Similarity in the expression of the heads is of great importance, since it greatly assists the hearer both to keep the course of thought in mind during the delivery of the discourse, and to retain it long afterward. Indeed, unless the main heads of division be expressed in concise and similar terms, they will be of very little advantage to the hearer. There should be, therefore, no attempt at variety of

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expression in the statement of the main heads of a formally announced division. The aim should be to get the best possible form of statement, and then, so far as good taste will permit, to run all the parts into the same mould. Yet it is far better to express the sense correctly, than to give all the heads similarity of structure. Do not sacrifice perspicuity and conciseness of expression to similarity of statement, but endeavor to combine the three. Robert Hall, in his sermon on "The Spirituality of the Divine Nature,"[1] in the statement of his main divisions, furnishes an example of some of the defects to which I have adverted. The text is, Isaiah xxxi. 3, "The Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses, flesh, and not spirit." The following are his principal heads.—

"I. The spirituality of the Deity is intimately connected with the possession of that infinite, unlimited power which renders him the proper object of entire confidence.

"II. The spirituality of God stands in close and intimate connection with his invisibility, or that property by which he is completely removed from the notice of our senses, especially that of sight.

"III. That God is a spirit and not flesh, is intimately connected with his immensity and omnipresence, or the capacity of being present in all parts of his creation.

[1] Vol. III., p. 295.

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"IV. Because God is a spirit and not flesh, he is possessed of infinite wisdom and intelligence.

"V. The doctrine of the spirituality of the divine nature establishes a most intimate relation between him and all his intelligent creatures.

"VI. The spirituality of the divine nature renders him capable of the exalted prerogative of being the satisfying portion, the supreme good of all intelligent beings."

It ought, however, to be said that this sermon is printed from the full notes of another, and that the plan of it, as left among the papers of its distinguished author, remedies, in part, these defects.

(5.) With an introduction. This assumes a great variety of forms. Often it appears only as a cardinal number expressed by a Roman numeral, as is sometimes seen in printed sermons, but more frequently with the additional expression of the numeral in words. It is itself often introduced by some remark, frequently by a recapitulation of previous heads of division. Often the numeral in whatever form disappears; and the chief divisions are marked without them, in a numberless variety of ways; and this is the prevailing, and perhaps the better form, except in the discussion of difficult themes. Great skill is needed to make an easy and graceful transition from one head to another, so that both the thought and the feeling of the hearer shall pass unchecked through all the parts

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of the development. But whatever be the form in which the chief heads of a division are announced, it should be a form which indicates to the audience that they are the main heads, or thoughts, of the sermon. This can be sometimes effected simply by pausing before the announcement of the head, or by placing on it an unusual emphasis.

It is proper to remark, in passing, that what has here been said of the form appropriate to the announcement of the main divisions, applies in general to the statement of the sub-divisions. When designated by a numeral, the Arabic should be used, and its expression in words should differ from that of the Roman numeral indicating a main head.

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LECTURE XII.

THE DEVELOPMENT—DEFINITION—GENERIC FORM—SPECIFIC FORMS.

I. The development in a sermon is that part of it by which the thought contained in the division is unfolded. Were the illustration used to represent, though imperfectly, the ideal of a sermon, continued, the development in a discourse would correspond to the foliage in a tree. It is the full unfolding of the thought wrapt up in each of the separate heads of the discourse.

II. The generic form of the development. There is a form which is common to every good development of a subject. Its qualities—aside from those which pertain to style, not now under discussion—are unity, completeness, symmetry, brevity, and order.

1. Unity. This relates to the unity of the development both of each main head of the division, and of the whole division.

(1.) The unity of the development of each main

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head of division. In unfolding the thought contained in each chief head of division, one should for the time regard that head as the subject of his discourse, the main proposition to be proved or illustrated. He should, so far as the development itself is concerned, forget every other part of the sermon, and give himself wholly to the elucidation of the thought contained in that single head. To this development he should endeavor to give both logical and rhetorical unity.

Logical unity in the development of a chief head of the division forbids,

(*a.*) An isolated thought. No thought employed in the development should be disconnected, but each should be joined to its neighbor by the bands of a remorseless logic.

Logical unity in the development of a main head of the division also forbids,

(*b.*) An irrelevant thought. There should be admitted no thought which does not grow directly out of the part developed. Ideally, the development of each main head of the division is simply a growth, containing within itself nothing which did not have its germ in the branch. To attain such relevancy is, perhaps, the most difficult thing to be achieved in the composition of a discourse. Its attainment requires such ample knowledge of the subject, such control and concentration of one's thoughts, such indifference to everything else, but

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the clear and logical development of the thought, that failure is more apt to be found here, than in any other part of a discourse. A common form of failure is the introduction of a thought into the development of one head, which properly belongs to another.

Rhetorical unity in the development of each of the principal heads of the division, requires,

(*a.*) Unity of design. Not only should there be in the development of each head, no isolated or irrelevant thought, but also the thoughts should, like rays of light passing through a convex lens, converge to a single point, contribute to a single effect. Throughout the entire process, the end should be kept distinctly in view, and should give law to the development. Every argument and illustration should directly tend to this one result.

(*b.*) Unity of style. Whatever be the nature of the thought to be developed, it is evident that good taste requires that it be exhibited in a uniform garb, that it be not arrayed in "a coat of many colors." Whatever be the dress, it should be simple, and adapted to the thought so as to set it forth to the best advantage, just as some color of dress is selected in order best to exhibit a particular type of beauty.

(*c.*) Unity of illustration. There should be no incongruity of illustration, no figure at variance with its neighbor, no heterogeneous gathering of

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illustrations within the development of a head of the division, as of animals within the ark. Whatever be the type of illustration which the unfolding of a head of the division may require, whether simple, or bold and elevated, it should be throughout of the same general character.

(2.) The unity of the development of the whole division. This also may be noticed in the two aspects of logical and rhetorical unity.

As regards logical unity, it is sufficient to remark that if the several main heads of division shall have been developed in conformity with the rules already given, then, unless there be a logical defect in the plan itself, the whole development will have logical unity. Hence the point here made is not strictly necessary, yet it is of such importance as to authorize a reference to it. The several developments of the main heads, should, when brought together, form, like the various members and parts of the human body, one perfect whole. There should be no superfluous member, no part that is not needed to fill out and perfect the development of the subject. The several developments, also, should be so arranged, that each shall assist the others, and all contribute to one logical result.

The rhetorical unity in the development of the whole division also requires,

(*a.*) Unity of design. The ideal topical sermon

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as before remarked, begins and ends in unity. Unity presides over its origin, its movement, and its aim. It comes forth from one thought, one proposition, and goes right on to the attainment of one object—the production of action. At every point in the development this end is in view, causing all the materials to fall into proper order, and making all converge to one result.

(*b.*) Unity of style. Although in the development of the different heads of the division considerable variety in style is allowable in order to develop properly the different thoughts, yet throughout the discourse there should be homogeneity of style. The same general characteristics of expression should prevail.

(*c.*) Unity of illustration. There may properly be in the sermon a greater latitude of illustration than in the development of a single head of it, and yet there should be throughout the entire discourse a certain congeniality of illustration. The nature of the theme, and the character of the audience, should largely determine the kind of illustrations to be used.

2. A second quality common to every good development in a sermon is completeness. This requires,

(1.) Completeness in the development of each head of the division. The whole thought which lies in the part should be set forth, if by argu

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ment, the argument should not stop short of conclusiveness, if by illustration, the illustration should make it luminous. Incompleteness in the development often results,

(*a.*) From want of knowledge on the subject. This is the most fruitful cause of want of completeness in the development. Evidently one cannot make a thought luminous to another, unless he clearly see it himself.

(*b.*) From want of time. It often happens that so much time has been taken in developing the first head or two of the sermon, that little time is left in which to unfold the remaining heads. This is a very common fault. In such case the sermon resembles a boy's top, large at the beginning but dwindling off amazingly toward the end.

(2.) Completeness in the development of the whole division. If each head shall have been fully unfolded, the only incompleteness which can exist in the entire development will be found at the points where these developments are united. Hence great care should be taken to join these developments together skillfully. Were the different members of the body never so perfect, yet if they were put together without proper joints—if one part were not exactly fitted to the others, —there would be "a schism in the body," and it would lack the grace of perfection. So the differ-

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ent parts of a discourse should not merely be put together, each in its proper place, but each part should be gracefully united to its fellow, so that the several developments shall together form one compact development. Much skill is often required to perfect this union of developments in a sermon, but labor here is well spent.

3. A third quality in every good development of a sermon is symmetry. Each chief head of the division, when developed, should form such part of the sermon, as its importance demands. Hence it would be manifestly improper to make each of the developments of the various main heads of a discourse occupy an equal space in it. A fruitful cause of unsymmetrical sermons is an unnecessary expansion of a favorite head of the division. The preacher is thus compelled to abridge the development of the other heads of the discourse so that, if these parts are complete in their development, yet they are not unfolded with sufficient fullness to be in keeping with the other part.

4. A fourth characteristic of every good development of a sermon is brevity. The following points should be noted:

(1.) The brevity of the development, whether of the whole subject, or of one of its divisions, must be largely determined by the intellectual character of an audience. With a given theme, the more intelligent an audience, the more able

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to grasp thought, to apprehend argument, and to see the practical bearing of a truth, the less need there is of prolixity of development. On the other hand, an audience composed largely of those unaccustomed to consecutive thinking, and slow of apprehension, needs to have a truth set forth with much fullness of outline, and variety of illustration, in order clearly to see the truth and to feel its power.

(2.) The brevity of the development should not become so excessive as to make the sermon appear synoptical. It should never conflict with the completeness and the symmetry of a discourse. However brief the discussion, it should be such as to allow each head of the division to be developed with completeness, and the whole division with symmetry.

(3.) The brevity of the whole development should be such as to bring the sermon within reasonable length. The length proper to a sermon should, of course, be determined by the nature of the subject, the intellectual character of the audience, and the occasion, yet it is, perhaps, within the truth to say that a majority of preachers are more apt to err on the side of too great length, than of too great brevity. It is a great art to develop a subject without waste of words, and to know when to stop.

5. A fifth quality of a good development of a

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sermon is order. The several developments of the chief heads of division should be so disposed that each shall aid the progress of the development. There should be uninterrupted progress of thought from the beginning to the end of the sermon. The entire development should be like a noble river flowing on ever widening and deepening toward its mouth. There should be no barrier athwart its progress, no dam over which it must leap, no lake in which it shall tarry, but it should move onward with ever increasing speed and power, until, in the fullness of its might, it shall pour logic into rhetoric—conviction into persuasion.

III. The specific forms of the development.

We have now reached a point in the analysis of a sermon at which we are best prepared to decide on the proper classification of sacred discourses. Hence, before entering on a discussion of the various forms of the development, let us notice briefly,

1. The different classifications of sermons, and the grounds of such classifications.

Although writers on homiletics have made numerous classifications of sermons, yet these are reducible to four, having their ground respectively in the hearer, the text, the design, and the subject.

(1.) The classifications which have their ground a the hearer.

(*a.*) In the mental faculty addressed. "Every

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discourse," says Dr. George Campbell, "is addressed either to the understanding of the hearers, to their imagination, to their passions, or to their will." If its aim be to enlighten the understanding either by explaining or proving the subject, it falls into the explanatory class; if to please the imagination, into the commendatory, if to move the passions, into the pathetic, and if to influence the will, into the persuasive class. Thus he makes four classes;—the explanatory and controversial (which are in one class), the commendatory, the pathetic, and the persuasive.[1]

(*b.*) In the ethical idea addressed. According to Dr. Francis Theremin, there are in man three ethical ideas—the idea of duty, of virtue, and of happiness—to one or more of which every discourse is addressed. If the appeal be made to one's idea of duty, the discourse corresponds to the judicial oration of Aristotle, if to the idea of happiness, to the deliberative, and if to that of virtue, to the demonstrative. Hence, Theremin's classification is Aristotle's, but its ground is not, like his, the state of the hearer, but the ethical idea addressed.[2]

(2.) The classifications which have their ground in the text.

[1] Campbell's "Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence," Lec. V.

[2] Theremin's Rhetoric, Chap. VII.

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"The three most generic species of sermons," says Prof. W. G. T. Shedd, "are the topical, the textual, and the expository," — a classification which has its ground in the manner of treating the text.[1]

On the same principle, also, Gresley and Ripley divide all sermons into two classes;—text-sermons and subject-sermons.

(3.) The classification which has its ground in the design of the preacher.

All sermons are divided by Dr. Daniel P. Kidder into five classes—expository, hortatory, doctrinal, practical, and miscellaneous or occasional. The ground of this classification is the governing design of the preacher.[2] In passing, it may be proper to notice the defective character of this classification in having a miscellaneous, or occasional class. Such a division of sermons is as unphilosophical as would be a similar distribution of the various kinds of apples, were one to attempt an exhaustive classification of them by making classes of pippins, russets, baldwins, and so on, and then adding a class to embrace miscellaneous and stray apples.

(4.) The classifications which have their ground in the subject.

(*a.*) In the nature of the subject. All sermons are divided by Dr. Ebenezer Porter into four

[1] Shedd's Homiletics, p. 144. [2] Kidder's Homiletics, Chap. XI.

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classes:—doctrinal, ethical, historical, and hortatory. The ground of this classification is the nature of the subject.[1] Professor Vinet makes substantially the same classification as Dr. Porter, though stated somewhat differently, and he makes the division upon the same principle. According to Vinet, all sermons may be arranged in five classes, viz., discourses on dogmatic, moral, and historical subjects, and on those drawn from nature, and from man.[2]

(*b.*) In the method of treating the subject. Dr. Henry Smith, in his lectures not yet published, distributes all sermons into five classes—explanatory, argumentative, expository, descriptive, and hortatory. The ground of this classification is the method of treating the subject.

Professor Austin Phelps makes substantially the same classification as Dr. Smith, and bases it upon the same ground, but reduces the five classes to four, by placing expository discourses in the class of explanatory. Thus he makes the explanatory, illustrative, argumentative, and persuasive.[3]

It would seem that a classification of discourses should not be made to depend on any external condition of a hearer, or upon anything within a hearer, whether faculty or idea. These are extrinsic to a

[1] Porter's Homiletics, Lec. V.
[2] Vinet's Homiletics, Part I., Chap. 2.
[3] Phelps' "Theory of Preaching," p. 34.

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sermon, and form no part of its qualities. The same might be said of the design of the preacher. It is entirely outside of his sermon, and forms no characteristic of it. Besides, it is not always true that the design of a preacher to produce a certain kind of discourse, always results as he anticipated. The ground of classification, then, should be found in discourses themselves, and not in any intention on the part of those who produced them. Nor does the manner of treating a text—whether topically, or textually—furnish a sufficient ground of classification, for this is nothing more than merely a difference in the statement and division of a theme.—Nor, again, do the various subjects of sermons seem to furnish a proper ground for their classification, since the same subject may oftentimes be properly set forth in different ways, by explanation, by argumentation, and the like.

The most natural, simple, and convenient classification of sermons seems to be that which has its ground in the method of treating the subject, and so in the form of the development. Thus we have three general classes—the explanatory, the argumentative, and the persuasive.

The explanatory discourse is that in which the theme is developed chiefly by explanation. The argumentative discourse is that in which the subject is developed chiefly by argumentation. The persuasive discourse is that in which the subject is

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developed chiefly by the persuasive process. This classification, though made to depend on the form of the development, yet corresponds precisely to the three objects for which all discourses are made, viz., to instruct, to convince or confirm, and to move the will. Before entering on a discussion of these three forms of development, it may be proper to remark, that as I shall not hereafter treat separately of the three classes of sermons represented by these three forms of development, I shall take the liberty occasionally of going outside of what strictly pertains to the discussion in hand, in order to notice in other parts of a sermon, what may be needed to a better understanding of the matter under consideration.

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LECTURE XIII.

THE EXPOSITORY DEVELOPMENT—DESIGN—ADVANTAGES—RULES.

2. The general explanatory development includes two forms—the expository and the illustrative. It aims to instruct the hearer by the two methods indicated. Let us notice these in their order.

A. The expository development aims to instruct the hearer by unfolding to him the meaning either of a connected portion of Scripture, or of a doctrine, or precept. The part selected often contains several verses. If only a running commentary be made on the verses, it is commonly termed a lecture, but if the passage contain unity of thought, and the object be to unfold this thought in its unity, the discourse is called an exposition. Let us look at some of the advantages of this form of development both to preacher and hearer.

(1.) The advantages to a preacher.

(*a.*) The expository development promotes a critical study and knowledge of Scripture. One

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who always discourses from a propositior is in danger of contracting the habit of studying the Bible in a disconnected rather than in a consecutive manner. He is in danger of coming to regard the Bible as a casket of gems, gathered with little regard to any law of combination, each gem perfect in itself, and which he is to exhibit without reference to its neighbor. Hence he will be apt to study the truths of Scripture in this disconnected manner, and thus will fail to reap the benefits which result from studying the Bible in consecutive portions. But if, on the other hand expository discourse shall occupy its proper space in his pulpit ministrations, he will naturally become accustomed to study the Scriptures in the same method—will acquire the habit of critical investigation, and this will greatly increase his knowledge of the divine word.

(*b.*) The expository development suggests themes for sermons. The Bible is full of germs of discourses, but multitudes of them lie beneath the surface, and are not discernible by those who pass rapidly along the text. Now a critical inspection from time to time of connected parts of Scripture necessary in order to prepare the preacher to compose properly expository discourses, will bring to light themes which lie embedded in these passages, and will furnish him with a rich variety of subjects for topical sermons.

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(c.) The expository development gives occasion to present a great variety of truths, and to apply truths in a way difficult to be done in topical discourse. This is one of the most important advantages of expository preaching. In topical discourse it is difficult to present certain truths, and to make certain applications of them, without the appearance of designed personality. But the expository form gives a preacher license to present in their order, and with their proper applications, all the truths contained in the passage selected. Hence, by this method, he is able to present certain truths, and to make certain applications of them, which delicacy would cause him to withhold in topical discourse. I have known ministers to preach a course of expository sermons on a whole epistle in order to attain some such object. So many-sided are the teachings of every book of the sacred Scriptures that no one of them can be faithfully expounded in course, without pouring a flood of light upon the duties of life. Especially is this true of the Epistles. Says Rev. F. W. Robertson, in his introductory lecture to his Lectures on the Epistles to the Corinthians—"I have selected for our present exposition the Epistles to the Corinthians, and this for several reasons—amongst others, for variety, our previous work having been entirely historical. (The book of Genesis). These Epistles are in a different tone altogether; they

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are eminently practical, rich in Christian casuistry. They contain the answers of an inspired Apostle to many questions which arise in Christian life. There is, too, another reason for this selection. The state of the Corinthian church resembles, in a remarkable degree, the state of the church of this town, in the present day. There is the same complicated civilization, the religious quarrels and differences of sect are alike, the same questions agitate society, and the same distinctions of class exist now as then. For the heart of Humanity is the same in all times. The principles, therefore, which St. Paul applied to the Corinthian questions will apply to those of this time. The Epistles to the Corinthians are a witness that Religion does not confine itself to the inward being of man alone, nor solely to the examination of orthodox opinions. No! Religion is Life, and right instruction in religion is not the investigation of obsolete and curious doctrines, but the application of spiritual principles to those questions, and modes of action, which concern present existence, in the Market, the Shop, the Study, and the Street."

(*d.*) The expository development aids to secure attention to the discourse. A preacher will always find his audience interested in an expository sermon, if properly prepared. There is a charm about it, a naturalness, freshness, and variety, which captivate hearers. Hence a preacher will

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always find it easy to hold the attention of his people to a carefully prepared expository sermon.

(2.) Turning, now, to notice the advantages of this form of development to a hearer, we name the following.

(*a.*) The expository development tends to give a thorough knowledge of Biblical truths. The greater part of those who attend on the preaching of the gospel, depend upon it almost entirely for whatever knowledge they have of Scripture beyond that which comes to them from a cursory reading of it. Very few of any congregation pursue a course of daily and careful study of the Bible. Hence, with few exceptions, a people will have only so much thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, as they gain through the teachings of their pulpit, and hence it becomes important that their pastor be to them in the place of study and commentaries.

(*b.*) The expository development tends to give a symmetrical view of Biblical truths. The system of truths taught in the Bible is like some vast temple of which the eye of the beholder can scan only a small part at once. There seems to be a tendency in the human mind to confine itself to some one particular view of this vast temple of divine truth, to the neglect of other parts of the edifice. It is thus, often, with Christian teachers. They are not infrequently found to have, each, some favorite doctrine or precept which comes in

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regularly in the ever unvarying round of a few topics of discourse. Thus a people get only that particular view of the great system of divine truth which their pastor takes. But let, now, this pastor so modify his method of preaching as frequently to introduce among his topical discourses the expository sermon, and he is compelled to walk around this great temple, and view it on all sides; and his people will soon find their knowledge of Biblical truth attaining to greater amplitude and symmetry. Hence this method of preaching is very important as a means of keeping a preacher from "going in ruts." It was a common remark among two neighboring churches, when bantering each other on the faulty preaching of their respective pastors, that one of them "would come out at the same hole, into whatever hole he entered," to which it was retorted that while the other "generally went in at the same hole, no one could tell at what hole he would come out."

(*c.*) That the expository development is advantageous to the hearer may be inferred from the fact that it was a primitive method. Our Saviour and the Apostles often employed it. It was thus that our Lord preached in the synagogue at Nazareth. Thus also Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, expounding certain passages in the book of Joel, and in the Psalms of David; and this we have reason to believe was, to a great extent,

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the method adopted by all the Apostles. Paul, we are told, thus preached to his countrymen on his arrival at Rome. Acts xxviii. 23: "And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded (ἐξετίθετο) the matter, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening." The apostles seem in this respect simply to have adopted the form of preaching which constituted a part of divine service in the synagogues, and to have made it subservient to their object of preaching Jesus as the Christ.

(3.) The rules for the expository development.

Since the form of the development should modify the other parts of a sermon, the expository development gives us the following rules respecting the choice of a passage to be expounded.

(*a*.) The passage selected for exposition should possess unity. It should have one train of thought, and should be complete in itself. Hence little attention should be given to the arbitrary divisions of chapter and verse. The entire passage becomes the text, which, if familiar to the audience, need not be read at the beginning of the discourse. But its several parts should be announced as they are taken up during the progress of the sermon.

(*b*.) The aim should be to reproduce in the de-

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velopment the unity of the thought in the passage expounded. The exposition is faulty, if it do not give the hearer the single and complete impression which the sacred text was designed to convey. To this end the passage should be intently studied. The aim should be to give an exact representation of the thought as it lies in the verses selected for the exposition.

(*c.*) The order of the main thoughts in the passage expounded should be the order of presentation in the development. The course of the thought should be followed, and dwelt upon, and not the mere words. The expository discourse should not degenerate into a mere running commentary on a passage, but should take up its main points, and dwell on these, as the chief heads of the sermon. These heads it is not generally needful to announce numerically and formally. Thus in an expository sermon, or a course of expository discourses, on the parable of the "Prodigal Son," one would naturally dwell on the following points in their order;—his demand, departure, manner of life, discovery of his poverty, useless attempts to improve his condition, reflection on his course of life, determination to forsake it and return home, and his gracious reception and treatment. Observe in Trench's "Notes on the Parables of our Lord," this clear development of the course of thought, and of the main points in the passage expounded. Dr. William

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M. Taylor, in his little volume entitled "The Lost Found," gives us several fine examples of very practical expository discourse on the parables. In Dr. Joseph Parker's three volumes on "The Inner Life of Christ," we have a remarkable blending of the application with the exposition, which renders these able expository discourses worthy of our careful study. Rev. F. W. Robertson's "Expository Lectures on the Epistles to the Corinthians" are also worthy of thoughtful study as fine examples of the development of the course of thought in the passages under consideration. Especially should Dr. Chalmers' "Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans" be studied as excellent models of expository sermons. They are remarkable for unity of thought and aim, amidst variety of materials. Careful attention should be given to this point by the preacher, that he may resist a common tendency to make a mere commentary on the passage, rather than an expository discourse, for, as Prof. Shedd well remarks:—"This species of sermonizing is very liable to be a dilution of divine truth, instead of an exposition."[1] It is against this loose and scattering kind of expository sermonizing, not wholly unknown in the English pulpit, that the Rev. Dr. Dexter protests in a letter from London, published in "The Congregationalist," January 24, 1877, in which, while acknowledging the value of

[1] Shedd's Hom., p. 155.

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the expository form of pulpit address, he adds:—"But, on the other hand, as I do not believe that the shot-gun can compete with the rifle as a weapon of war, so I do not believe that scattering comments upon the Word, however devout and germane, can compare with the old-fashioned 'doctrinal preaching' of our fathers, in real and effectual force in persuading men to be reconciled to God."

(*d.*) When the aim of the expository sermon is to set forth the meaning of a doctrine or precept, the subject should generally take the form of a rhetorical proposition. For example, if I wished to take up an entire discourse in expounding the doctrine of native depravity, I should not usually throw my theme into the form of a logical proposition, thus:—Mankind are depraved from birth,—but should propose to speak of the Native depravity of the human race. The first form of statement is better adapted to the argumentative development, the last to the explanatory. But if, for any reason, it should seem best to state the subject in the logical form, the process of development should be as if the theme were in the rhetorical form. Thus, if in an explanatory discourse, I were to announce as my theme, the logical proposition:—Prayer is a power with God, I should not go on to prove this proposition, but to show my hearers how it is that prayer can be a power with God, consistently with his decrees.

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(*e.*) The principal heads of division should be so arranged that the development shall advance from that which is most simple, to that which is most difficult. It is well to set out with your audience in the light, and, as you lead them on in the path which stretches away into the mist, to pour light into the darkness, and scatter it.

(*f.*) It is sometimes best to make such a division and arrangement, that the entire development shall come forth from two main heads; the first setting forth what the doctrine is not, the second what it is. This method, however, is very liable to abuse. It should be employed only in the elucidation of subjects difficult to be understood, and respecting which there are apt to exist various misconceptions.

(*g.*) The sources of the materials, the forms, and the qualities of the expository development are the same as those required in the exposition itself. Since in the expository discourse, the exposition so expands itself as to fill the body of the sermon, the rules which have been given for the exposition as a distinct part of a discourse, equally apply to the expository development. As these rules have been fully discussed under the heads above indicated, it is not necessary to repeat them. But it should be added that when the aim is to set forth the meaning of a Biblical doctrine, or the nature and extent of a precept, we

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have more to do with the rational exposition, and less with the verbal. We seek to gain our end rather by means of definition, description, illlustration, comparison, contrast, and the like, than by dwelling on the words, and the construction of the text.

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LECTURE XIV.

THE ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT—DESIGN—ADVANTAGES—RULES.

B. The illustrative development aims to instruct the hearer by unfolding to him divine truth as illustrated by character. It seeks through the delineation of character to give a clearer conception, and deeper impression of Biblical truth. The character to be portrayed may be that of an individual, of a community, or of a nation, and may be set forth through the biography of a person or of society,—which last is Dr. Arnold's definition of history,—and may be delineated in a single act, or by acts extending through a series of years, or a life-time.

(1.) The advantages to the preacher.

(*a.*) The illustrative development promotes vivacity of style. Owing to the peculiarly uniform nature of the subjects of which the preacher treats, he is more apt, perhaps, than writers on other subjects, to fall into a formal and dry manner of composition. A frequent attempt to delineate

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character to an audience, so that it shall stand forth with clearness and fulness of outline is one of the best means to keep one's style from becoming dull and heavy. To gain facility and excellence in this kind of composition, one should read such authors as Walter Scott, Washington Irving, and "George Eliot."

(*b.*) The illustrative development aids the preacher to set forth a great variety of truths in an attractive and impressive form. Nothing more interests hearers than a good delineation of character. There is about it a charm which keeps any audience attentive. The preacher who becomes an adept in this species of composition, will find that he holds the attention of his hearers by it more easily than by any other. Now the Bible is full of history, biography, and scenes which furnish excellent materials for this kind of discourse.

(2.) Among the advantages of this method of development to the hearer are the following:

(*a.*) The illustrative development promotes permanence of impression. The mind is most deeply impressed by that which it sees most clearly, and in which it is most interested. Hence a truth embodied in the life, will, when properly set forth in this most attractive of all forms of development, impress itself most permanently upon an audience Dr. Fitch's admirable "Descriptive Sermons," de

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livered in the chapel of Yale College to successive classes more than a third of a century ago, remain fixed in the memory, while other sermons of his, equally able, have long since been forgotten.

(*b.*) The illustrative development aids the hearer to embody truth in his life. There are presented to him, not truths in abstract forms—as they lie in theological systems,—but truths in the concrete—as they show themselves in a human life, so that he sees the manner in which these divine truths, when embraced by man, exhibit themselves in the various relations of life. Thus, by this most instructive and interesting of all teachers—example—he is taught how to incorporate these truths into his own life. It is a remarkable evidence of the wisdom of God, that he has not given to man a volume of abstract truths, but one full of truths in living forms. How different from human wisdom! This gives to us the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno, and the "Eleusinian Mysteries," to be understood only by the favored few.

(3.) The rules of the illustrative development.

(*a.*) The selection of a text. If the character to be delineated be that of a person, community, or nation described in the Bible, the text should, of course, be chosen from a passage containing such description, but if not, a text should generally be selected which sets forth the particular trait of character on which the preacher designs chiefly to

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dwell. Thus Robert Hall, in his funeral sermon for Dr. John Ryland, selected for his text, John xxi. 7, "That disciple whom Jesus loved," as expressive of the distinguishing traits of the character of the deceased—humility and love. Rev. Thomas Williams, in his celebrated funeral sermon for Dr. Emmons, chose as his text, Eccl. xii. 9, "And, moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge," since he wished to dwell especially on the instructiveness of Dr. Emmons' preaching. Frequently in funeral discourses it is proper to choose a text which seems to set forth some special providence of God in the life of the person, or in his death. Thus Dr. Emmons preached on the death of Washington from the text, 2 Sam. i. 27, "How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!" Robert Hall selected as the text for his funeral discourse on the death of the youthful Princess Charlotte of Wales, Jer. xv. 9, "She hath given up the ghost; her sun is gone down while it was yet day."

(*b.*) The methods of division. There are in the illustrative development two methods of division, to which Dr. Campbell, and others since his time, have applied the terms historical and logical.

The historical method of division has its ground in time.

If the discourse is to include the whole life, the chief heads of division would include the several

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parts of the life in the order of time. Thus Prof. Park, in an article in the "Congregational Quarterly" on the life of Dr. J. S. Clarke, describes in order, his early education, college life, seminary life, and pastoral life.

If the discourse is to embrace only a part of the life, the heads of division would include only the successive parts of this period. But when the part of the life to be delineated is small, it is generally not best to make the divisions prominent.

The logical division has its ground in character. If the discourse is to delineate the whole character, the main heads of division would set forth the chief traits of the character. Thus in the funeral sermon for Dr. Ryland, to which allusion has been made, as it is the intention of the preacher to delineate the entire character, while giving prominence to love as the distinguishing trait, he sets forth under successive heads, the humility which characterized the deceased, his gentleness, self-denial for others, truthfulness, candor, and diligence.

But if the discourse is to portray a single trait, the main heads of division would present the evidences or illustrations of such trait. Thus if I wished to portray the single trait of fidelity to God, in the character of Daniel, I should notice under successive heads of division, the various obstacles which he had to encounter, and over which his fealty to God triumphed.

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(*c.*) The qualities set forth should be moral qualities—either virtues or vices,—and not physical nor intellectual. With these last, the pulpit has little to do. It is not the place to eulogize, or disparage one for what nature has given or withheld. If you speak of one's intellectual abilities, it should be with a moral design—to show that they were made subservient to the cause of Christ, or prostituted to unworthy ends. These moral qualities, as has been observed, may form the chief heads of division, and their development make the body of the sermon. But in funeral discourses, it was formerly the almost universal custom, and it is now a common one, to introduce the character of the deceased near the close of the sermon, to illustrate and enforce the truth presented. Thus Dr. Emmons, in his sermon at the funeral of Rev. David Sanford, from the text, Acts xi. 24, "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord," discourses, at length, on his theme—"The Influence of a Holy Heart on a Christian Minister," —and then, near the close of his sermon, introduces the character of his deceased friend, to illustrate and impress the truth developed in the discourse. This is doubtless the best method, whenever in the life and character of the person of whom we are to discourse, there are not sufficient materials to fill up the body of the sermon. But when there

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is an abundant supply of appropriate materials, it is best, after announcing the text, to proceed at once to the delineation of the character. The person respecting whom you are to discourse, thus becomes the subject of the sermon. For example, Mr. Hall, in the funeral discourse referred to, after a somewhat lengthy introduction, fills up the body of the sermon with a delineation of Dr. Ryland's character. Thus Dr. Leonard Bacon, in his sermon at the funeral of Dr. Lyman Beecher, from the text, 1 Cor. xv. 57, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,"—after a felicitous introduction, proceeds at once, to speak of Dr. Beecher's life and character. And here I would pause for a moment, to caution you against lending your influence to the practice already quite common among ministers in some parts of our country, of preaching a funeral sermon whenever a member of the congregation dies. In the South the custom is, it is said, so well-nigh universal, that if a young child die, a funeral discourse is expected, and almost claimed as a matter of right, from the pastor. In our Western churches, also, the custom is becoming quite prevalent. It is less so in our Eastern churches, and is rarely known in England. The chief argument for the practice, is the opportunity given for impressing divine truth on hearts rendered unusually susceptible of religious influences. But in order to im

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prove such an opportunity, it is not necessary to preach a formal discourse. A few well prepared remarks will be equally effective.

But there are two or three weighty objections to the practice. It imposes a grievous burden on pastors. Few, in large parishes, can endure it. Besides, the custom, if consented to, becomes practically universal. Every family will expect and claim from their pastor a funeral discourse whenever one of the members dies.

The practice, too, is apt to lead the pastor into indiscriminate and unjust eulogy of persons, at variance with his pulpit teachings.

Moreover, there are few persons in any ordinary parish, whose characters are such as to call for a formal discourse at death. Such discourses might be appropriate at the decease of an officer of the church, or one of its aged and prominent members, but should rarely be given for others. Appropriate services at the house of mourning, consisting of the reading of selected passages of Scripture, singing, remarks, and prayer, are usually all that the occasion calls for, and can be made as impressive and useful as more formal services.

(*d.*) The form of the delineation should be the concrete. The character should not be presented in the abstract form—by analyzing and describing the separate traits of the character, much as a ec-

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turer on anatomy would lay side by side the various parts of the human body, and discourse on each in succession,—but they should be exhibited in the concrete form, as they embody themselves in the life, in a series of acts, or in a single act. And the same principle holds, whether I wish to delineate the whole character, several traits of the character, or a single trait. Thus should I desire to sketch the character of Judas, or to set forth his covetousness and treachery, I would present these traits as they exhibited themselves in his various movements in betraying his Master. I would take the recorded facts of his conduct, especially from the last supper to the hour of betrayal, and throwing them into the narrative form, would try to make my audience keep sight of the perfidious wretch, and see how the traits which I wished to portray, developed themselves every hour to the consummation of his deed of darkness. A good delineation of character thrown into such a form will always be full of life, full of interest, and full of power. There are many fruitful themes of this class to be found in the Bible, and a preacher who has acquired skill in this form of development will find his people more deeply interested in this kind of discourse than in any other. It may be added that this form of development is not very difficult of attainment.

(*e.*) The style of the delineation should be

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vivacious. Every part of the sermon should be full of life. The language should be popular, and the figures true to life, and abundant. No other form of development admits of so great variety of figures and illustrations.

(4.) It may be well to add that the illustrative development should be chiefly used, when preaching to children. It is most auspicious for the growing power of the pulpit, that it is addressing itself more and more to children. In this respect a great change is manifestly taking place in preaching.[1] Not many years ago a sermon to children was rarely heard. Now they are coming to be recognized as a part of the congregation, and as having spiritual needs which the preacher should regard. A wise pastor will not neglect the children of his parish, in his pulpit ministrations, but will give to them their portion in due season. Whether he should do this by devoting now and then—it may be at stated seasons—an entire discourse to them, or by addressing them briefly each week before

[1] Books on preaching to children are rapidly increasing. Among the latest of these may be named,

"Thirty Sermons to Boys and Girls," by J. G. Merrill, Chicago, 1879

"Bible Children," by James Wells, New York, 1880.

"Talks to Boys and Girls about Jesus," by W. F. Crafts, New York, 1881.

"The Children and the Church," by F. E. Clark, Boston, 1882.

"The Conversion of Children," by E. P. Hammond, New York, 1882.

"Lamps and Paths," by T. T. Munger, Boston, 1884.

"Sermons for Children," by A. Hastings Ross, Boston, 1887.

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entering upon the delivery of his morning sermon or, again, by interspersing throughout his discourse some anecdote or illustration especially for the children,[1] is a question which each pastor must decide for himself in view of his adaptations. Each of these methods has advantages, and it may be well not to adhere exclusively to either, but occasionally to vary from one to another.

But whichever method is followed, the illustrative development of the truth will be found the form of presentation best adapted to the child-mind. For it cares little for arguments and reasonings, but delights in stories and illustrations. And the skillful preacher will find these materials in abundance in Scripture, history, nature, and daily life, awaiting his use. Yet he should see to it that his preaching to children does not degenerate into mere story-telling, but that it is in reality a development of the truth by illustration. The form of presentation should differ from the illustrative development of the truth to the mature mind chiefly in this, that the illustrations should be more simple, varied, and abundant. The main thoughts presented should not be dwelt upon at length, and the entire sermon should be brief.

(5.) The illustrative development is also especially adapted to out-door preaching.

[1] This method is strongly recommended by Dr. John Hall, in his volume entitled, "God's Word Through Preaching," pp. 180, 181.

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It would seem that the great problem now before the churches—how to carry the gospel to the masses—may be solved, in part, by out-door preaching. In large cities this is an effective method of reaching multitudes who will not enter a house of worship. If they are to hear the gospel, it must be preached to them in the streets and parks where they congregate. Much may be done by means of mission schools and churches to bring the people under the power of the gospel, but there will still remain multitudes that no such instrumentalities will reach. This fact the churches are becoming more and more to realize, and many of them have, of late, held religious services in the open air during the summer months. These meetings have generally been held early on Sunday evening, and often in the vicinity of a church building into which the people were invited to worship at the close of the out-door service.

This method of preaching in the open air, though an innovation upon the established practice of preaching in the churches, yet is a return to a primitive method. Our Saviour and his Apostles often preached in the open air. Such preachers as Whitefield and Wesley also practiced this method with great success, and missionaries to heathen lands employ it frequently and effectively.

Although out-door preaching does not differ essentially from in-door preaching, yet its effective-

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ness requires rare qualities in both preacher and sermon. He must have perfect control of himself, abounding good nature, great mental alertness and versatility, and, above all, such earnest desire to save men as will incite him to put his whole mind and heart into his preaching, and adapt it in every possible way to the spiritual needs of the people. And, then, his sermon should be largely illustrative,—not argumentative, dogmatic, and scholastic,—should set forth some great truth of Scripture chiefly by varied illustrations drawn from common life, and from nature. Yet the illustrations should not be so numerous, as to conceal rather than make luminous and impressive the thought. The sermon should be full of life and movement, and should hasten on at every point to its conclusion.

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LECTURE XV.

THE ARGUMENTATIVE DEVELOPMENT—DESIGN—ADVANTAGES—RULES.

3. The argumentative development aims to convince or confirm the hearer. It aims either to convince one, who from unbelief, doubt, or disbelief does not accept a given truth, or to confirm in his belief one who does accept it.

(1.) Let us look at some of the advantages of this form of the development to the preacher.

(*a.*) The argumentative development tends greatly to increase his intellectual ability. There is no method of preaching which expands one's intellect like this. He is here "put to his best." He has entered as a combatant into the arena, and must overcome his adversary, or go down before him. The very position, therefore, in which he has placed himself, reacts upon him, and urges him to the fullest exertion of his intellectual powers. Hence such an exercise often repeated, cannot fail to expand his intellect, giving to it greater sweep

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and grasp. Besides, the doctrines of which argumentative discourses chiefly treat, are of such a nature as to require for their proper defence, the most close and persistent investigation. The preacher must wrestle with the difficulties which surround a doctrine, and overcome them, before he can lead others to it. Now this process, frequently repeated, will give to him a robustness of intellect which he will gain in no other way. As the old wrestler, Antæus, gained new strength every time he touched his mother, Earth, so will a preacher receive new mental energy every time he comes down upon these great doctrines of the Christian system.

(*b.*) The argumentative development tends greatly to increase his knowledge of the controverted doctrines of Scripture. The searching investigation on which he must enter in order successfully to defend the view which he takes of a doctrine, is the best possible method by which to arrive at a clear conception of such truth. The very endeavor to make others see it clearly, makes it stand forth radiant to himself.

(*c.*) The argumentative development tends greatly to increase his influence with his people. The power which a preacher has over his hearers greatly depends on his known ability to maintain the truth. If he never enter the field of conflicting opinions, never address himself to the discussion of a contro-

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verted doctrine, but wholly confine himself to those parts of the Christian system which are rarely, if ever, attacked, he will fail to gain the strongest influence over them. There are in every congregation men with whom such a preacher will be well-nigh powerless. And these are generally the men who wield the controlling influence in a society. Hence the preacher who would attain to a high degree of influence among his people, must convince them that he is able to think, and to defend whatever position he takes, as well as to exhort. This full conviction of his ability, on the part of his hearers, gives him great power over them. They will look up to him with respect, and opposers of the truth will fear him. "Fenum habet in cornu; longè fuge."[1] "He has hay on his horn, look out for him."

(2.) Turning now to note the benefits of this form of development to the hearer, we name the following:—

(*a.*) The argumentative development greatly tends to convince those who do not accept the controverted doctrine. In every congregation, this class includes more persons than is generally supposed. Many, who hold erroneous views of cardinal doctrines of Christianity, or who are in doubt whether to accept or reject them, are kept by various reasons, from publishing the fact. They are to be found in nearly every Christian congregation,

[1] "Horace," S., L. I., S. 4., 33.

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and the preacher will not go astray, who, at proper times, presents in the most forcible manner he is able, the arguments in defence of the main doctrines of the Christian system.

(*b.*) The argumentative form of development greatly tends to confirm the belief of those who accept the controverted doctrine. Such hearers often compose a majority of the audience, yet they are frequently not less benefited by the discussion, than those to whom it is directly addressed. They become the more strengthened in their belief, by having the grounds of it clearly set before them.

Hence it is important that a preacher go over occasionally the arguments on which he relies for the proof of the various doctrines of Scripture.

(*c.*) The advantages of the argumentative development to the hearer may be inferred from the fact that it entered largely into the primitive method of preaching. There is a chain of argument running throughout our Lord's discourses and parables. Paul was emphatically an argumentative preacher. While in Athens, the sacred historian informs us (Acts xvii. 17), "he reasoned — '*διελέγετο*'—in the synagogue with the Jews, and the devout persons, and in the market-place every day with them that met with him," and the outline we have of his speech on Mars-hill, shows it to have been in the strictest sense, an argumentative discourse. So also it is said (Acts xvii. 2)

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that when at Thessalonica, he, "as his custom was, went in unto them" (the Jews), "and for three Sabbath days reasoned—'διελέξατο'—with them from the Scriptures."

(*d.*) The advantages of this method of development to the hearer may also be inferred from the fact that the most effective preachers have been largely argumentative preachers. Such were Luther, Calvin, and Knox, such the distinguished New England divines of the last century, and Dwight, and Mason, Griffin, and Finney, in this. The power of these preachers, and others like them, increased from year to year throughout their ministry, and he who would attain to similar power must, like these pulpit giants, lay its foundations on the solid basis of reasoning.

(3.) The rules of the argumentative development.

It is not my design to go into the minutiæ of this form of development, as this would consume time not at our command, but simply to put you in possession of a few practical rules which may be of service in the composition of argumentative discourses.

(*a.*) The form of the subject.

The theme should take the form of a logical proposition.

The position to be maintained should be clearly and briefly announced to the audience by the

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proposition, which should itself be evidently taught in the text.

(*b.*) The methods of the division.

If the proposition is to be supported by one argument, the main points of this argument should constitute the main heads of division. For example, if it were my object to prove the Divine existence by the single argument of design, I would make the chief indications, or classes of indications, of design, the main heads of division. Thus Dr. Emmons in his sermon on "The Being and Attributes of God proved from his Works,"[1] from the text, Heb. iii. 4, "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God," proceeds in the first part of his discourse to prove the being of God from the existence of the world.

"I. This world might have had a beginning.

"II. If this world might have begun to exist, then it might have had a cause of its existence.

"III. If the world might have had a cause, then it must have had a cause.

"IV. The cause which produced this world must be equal to the effect produced."

If the proposition is to be supported by several independent arguments, these arguments should constitute the main heads of division. But if

[1] Vol. II., Ser. 1.

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these arguments be many, it is well to classify them, and make these classes the heads of division. Thus if it were my object to prove the being of God by various independent arguments —as the argument from design, the moral, the historical argument, etc., I would make these the chief heads of the division. For example, Robert Hall, in his sermon entitled, "Reflections on War" (Text, Ps. xlvi. 8, 9, "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth," etc.,) discusses the evils of war under two heads—war as a source of misery, and war as a source of crimes.

If the proposition is to be supported in its parts, these parts should constitute the chief heads of division. Thus I might prove that mankind are depraved, by showing that they are depraved I. in heart; and II. in life. It does not seem necessary to go into a description of the various forms of argumentation, since they are all to be found fully set forth in treatises on Logic.

(*c.*) The arrangement of arguments.

There are two methods of arranging arguments, one of which has its ground in the argunents themselves, and the other in the hearers.

The nature of the arguments to be used in support of a proposition often determines their order. Such, for example, is the case in cumulative argumentation, in which the first argument is

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necessary to the support of the second, the second to the third, etc. Thus in the above-mentioned sermon of Dr. Emmons, on the evidence of the Divine existence from the existence of the world, the nature of the arguments requires that they be brought forward in the order in which they stand.

The views of the hearers respecting the proposition to be supported, and the arguments to be adduced, often determine the order of the arguments. If those addressed are opposed to the proposition, many arguments in support of it, which to others would be convincing, would to them seem unsatisfactory. In such case, it is often well to bring forward at the outset some of the strongest arguments at command, and when the hearers have become somewhat inclined to a belief of the proposition, to adduce other arguments in themselves less convincing. But when those addressed, are not prejudiced against the position taken, it is generally best to arrange the arguments in the order of their strength in the estimation of the hearers, the strongest being placed last. In this way, the discourse gathers strength and power as it advances. This general rule will enable us on each occasion to decide in what particular part of the development a given argument should appear. We have only to interrogate our hearers to learn from them in what

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estimation they would be likely to hold a certain argument, in order to decide where in the development it should appear. This is a simple criterion, and one easily applied by a preacher who knows his people. For example, suppose in a discourse designed more especially for a part of his audience inclined to skepticism, he is to defend a doctrine by arguments drawn from nature, reason, and revelation. Now it is evident, that according to this principle of arrangement, he would not place the argument from revelation last in the series. But if, on the other hand, he intends to address those who fully acknowledge the truth of revelation, he would place the argument from revelation last.

(*d.*) The place of refuting objections.

There are three places for replying to objections, —at the beginning of the development, during the development, and at its close.

At the beginning of the development. This is the appropriate place, whenever those addressed are so prejudiced against the proposition, that they will not listen with candor to arguments in its support until their objections shall have been removed. This is also often a good way, when the objections are few, or can be reduced to one.

During the development. This is done in three ways—either by placing the refutation of the objections together, near the middle of the develop-

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ment, which is the course recommended by Whately, among others; or by making the objections the main heads of division, as did some of the French orators, as cited by Theremin; or by replying to the various objections as they arise, in connection with the different arguments brought forward in support of the proposition. This last I regard as generally the preferable method.

At the close of the development. This is proper in cases in which the previous arguments are necessary in order to a successful refutation of the objections. It is well in such instances, to notice the objections at the beginning of the discussion, and to state that you will reply to them in the proper place.

(*e.*) General remarks on the argumentative development. Employ no arguments that would not satisfy yourself, were you the person addressed. Put yourself into the place of your hearer, and then carefully inquire,—Ought the argument which I am now to offer, to convince me, were I holding the opposite opinion? This rule is all the more important from the fact that the minister is not called to account for his arguments, as is the lawyer.

Employ no more arguments than are needed in order to establish your proposition. It is a great mistake to multiply arguments unnecessarily with a view to produce and strengthen conviction. A multitude of arguments distract the mind, and pre-

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vent it from feeling the full force of a few strong arguments. The preacher should select a few of the strongest arguments at his command, and so develop these, that they shall exert their full force on the hearers.

In refuting an objection, state it in its full force. Convince your hearers, that you are dealing candidly in the matter, and are not so solicitous to gain your point, as to reach the truth.

Notice only those objections, a refutation of which is necessary in order to establish your proposition. The preacher should not stop advancing along the straight path toward the conviction of his hearers in order to answer any objection which does not lie directly athwart his way. It is not wise to acquaint your audience with objections of which they never heard, for the sake of refuting them.

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LECTURE XVI.

THE PERSUASIVE DEVELOPMENT—DESIGN—ADVANTAGES—RULES.

4. The design in the persuasive development is to move the will of the hearer. This is its immediate object. The final end sought to be reached by each species of sacred discourse is the production of an act, or series of acts of the will. But while the other kinds do not directly seek to attain this result, the persuasive discourse aims directly and wholly at influencing the will. The hearer is supposed to be in need neither of instruction nor conviction respecting a truth, but simply to be without sufficient emotion in view of it to cause his will to act. It is, indeed, often necessary to incorporate some of the elements of the other forms of development into the persuasive, yet the development receives and combines these elements with sole reference to one result—moving the will.

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(1.) Among the advantages of this form of development may be named the following:

(*a.*) The persuasive development impresses on the preacher himself the duties which he inculcates on others. He brings himself in every persuasive discourse to stand in the presence of the motives which urge to the performance of some duty,—to gaze at them until he himself feels their power coming upon and moving him. This is one of the most excellent results attending a faithful discharge of ministerial duties. By such a course the preacher shall both save himself, and them that hear him. He is constantly preaching to himself, and applying to himself all the motives which he presents to others. The faithful preacher gains in this way his most affecting views of truth.

(*b.*) The persuasive development directly impresses upon the hearer the motives to the Christian life. The whole object of this species of discourse is to urge to the performance of duties which the hearer clearly sees, and acknowledges ought to be done, but to the discharge of which he is unwilling to give himself. This unwillingness is not confined to the impenitent, but is also to a great extent shared by Christians. Hence it is necessary to give to each class, "precept upon precept, line upon line." This species of sacred discourse should, perhaps, occupy a larger space in the ministrations of the pulpit than any other. It

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should have much the same relation to the other species of discourse, which the preceptive parts of the Scriptures have to the other parts.

(2.) The rules of the persuasive development

(*a.*) The selection of a text. The choice of the text should be determined by the particular manner in which the preacher designs to present a duty.

If the preacher design to urge a duty by a single motive, the text should assert the duty with the motive attached. Thus Dr. Emmons has a sermon entitled "The Holiness of God binds Men to be Holy,"[1] from the text, 1 Peter i. 16, "Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy."

If the preacher design to urge a duty by a variety of motives, the text ordinarily should simply assert the duty. Thus Saurin has a sermon on "The duty of giving Alms,"[2] from the text, Luke xi. 41, "Give alms of such things as ye have," in which he impresses the duty by various motives. This rule as above indicated, is not universally observed by good preachers. Often, when a duty is to be urged by several motives, a text is chosen which sets forth the duty with one motive, which is noticed last in the sermon. Thus Dr. Blair has a discourse "On the motives to Constancy in Virtue,"[3] from Gal. vi. 9, "An let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not," in which the

[1] Vol. IV., Ser. 2. [2] Vol. IV., Ser. 9. [3] Vol. I., Ser. 15.

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motive of reward is introduced last. Dr. Campbell was the first, so far as I know, to make the above suggestion. When it is the design to urge to the performance of a duty by a variety of motives, Dr. Campbell calls the discourse a "general persuasive," when by a single motive, a "particular persuasive." In this he is followed by Dr. Fitch, who makes the same distinction.

(*b.*) The form of the subject.

If the preacher design to urge a duty by a single motive, the theme should generally take the form of a logical proposition, in which the duty is commonly made the subject and the motive the predicate. For example, were I to preach from Isaiah lv. 7, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon," I might state my theme thus: The coming to God secures pardon.

If the preacher design to urge a duty by a variety of motives, the theme should generally be in the form of a rhetorical proposition. Thus Dr. South has a sermon on "Of Loving our Enemies,"[1] from the text, Matt. v. 44, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies," in which this duty is set forth by several considerations. It does not here seem necessary to discuss the various sources of motives

[1] Vol. I., Ser. 27.

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They constitute every kind of good which man desires, and every kind of evil which he seeks to avoid. The preacher may range at will through this whole domain to select his motives, yet he will, of course, give most prominence to the motives derived from moral good and evil.

(*c.*) The methods of division.

If the preacher design to urge a duty by a single motive, the different aspects of the motive should constitute the chief heads of division. Thus in preaching from Rom. xii. 1, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service," if it were my design to set forth the mercies of God as a motive to self-consecration, I should give as main heads, the specification of the chief mercies of God in Christ to the Christian.

If the preacher design to urge a duty by a variety of motives, these motives should constitute the main heads of division. See the divisions of Dr. South's sermon above cited.

If the preacher design to set forth at considerable length, the meaning of a duty, as well as to urge it, the explanation may be introduced as a head of division. Thus Dr. J. M. Mason, in a sermon on the "Nature and Necessity of Regeneration,"[1] from the text, John iii. 5, "Verily,

[1] Vol. IV. Ser. 4.

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verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," divides his sermon into two main heads—the nature of regeneration, and its necessity. This was a common form of division with the divines of the last two centuries. It is a combination of the explanatory and the persuasive forms of development. It is not, in many respects, a desirable method of division. Usually it is better to turn it into the persuasive development by abbreviating the explanation, and placing it in the part of the sermon appropriate to the exposition.

(*d.*) The arrangement of motives.

The same general principles of arrangement prevail in the persuasive development as in the argumentative, for motives are simply arguments addressed to the will. The will can be moved only through the excitement of the emotions, and the emotions can be aroused only through the conviction of the understanding. Hence the persuasive development must rest, at bottom, on the argumentative. The hearer must become convinced that the course of conduct to which he is urged, is his duty, before he will surrender himself to any emotion in view of it, or consent to enter on it. For this purpose it is often necessary to conduct him through a process of reasoning; yet even in such a process there will be an essen-

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tial difference between the argumentative development and the persuasive. The former has no other immediate end in view than simply to convince the understanding, and brings forward and combines all its arguments and illustrations to attain this object. Everything in it is made to appeal to the understanding. But in the latter, everything is selected and arranged in order to effect the will. Every motive, figure, illustration is introduced for the sole purpose of urging the man from conviction to emotion, and from emotion to action. Hence, at no point in the development, is an appeal made to the understanding alone, but the eye of the preacher is fixed on the emotional nature, and the will of his hearer, and his constant effort is so to set forth the various motives which he has to present, that they shall at once appeal to the understanding, the emotions, and the will.

(*e.*) The place of noticing excuses.

The same general principles prevail here, also, as in the case of answering objections in the argumentative development. Thus it is sometimes well to notice at the outset of a discourse, the prominent excuses made for neglecting the duty which you design to urge, and then to proceed to enforce the duty. Or you may notice the excuses at different points in the progress of the development, or, again, you may reserve your notice of them till its close, and then view them

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in the light of the whole development. Which of these courses it may be proper in a given case to adopt, must be decided by the preacher's good sense in view of circumstances.

In closing what I have to say of this form of development, I would remark that no other, except the illustrative, admits of so great variety of style and illustration.

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LECTURE XVII.

THE CONCLUSION—DEFINITION—IMPORTANCE—PLACE—FORM—DESIRABLE QUALITIES.

I. The conclusion in a sermon is that part of it by which the thought contained in the development is practically applied.

II. The importance of the conclusion becomes evident from two considerations.

1. Every truth revealed in the Scriptures has a practical application to human life. That this is a fact we should infer from what we know of the economy of God in other things. Nowhere can we discern a waste of the Divine resources. We may also draw the same inference from the known wisdom of God. It must lead him to adapt everything to the end for which he designed it. The Bible itself also sets forth the same truth. "Every Scripture inspired of God," we are told, (2 Tim. iii. 16,) "is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of

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God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." Although certain parts of the Scriptures have less direct reference to human conduct than other parts, yet they all have to a greater or less degree a legitimate practical application to some condition of individual or social life.

2. The hearer, unless aided by the preacher, rarely makes a faithful application of the truth to himself. Many hearers do not clearly see the relation of a truth to themselves, unless it be pointed out to them; and many are averse to the effort necessary to trace out, and make the proper application of a truth to themselves. Unless, therefore, the main thought of a sermon be urged home on the heart and conscience of the hearer, but little good is ordinarily effected by the ablest development of a theme. But though no part of a sermon is more important than its conclusion, no other is so apt to be poorly done. This results most frequently from want of forethought, and of time. In order to make a powerful conclusion to a sermon, the design should from the outset be kept continually in view, and all the thoughts of the discourse so marshaled as to produce a single impression. If this be not done throughout the body of the discourse, the preacher, when he comes to its close, will find that he can make, at best, but a weak conclusion. Nor will the result be

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less disastrous, if, when he comes to the end of his sermon, he be so hurried, that he can throw out only crude and disconnected thoughts.

III. The place of the conclusion.

The main thought of a sermon may be practically applied either during the development, or at its close; or both during the development and at its close.

1. The application during the development.

This is termed the continuous application, and is allowable whenever the different heads of division permit an immediate application. Cases of this kind are frequent in expository and persuasive discourses. It should not be used except in sermons of a very practical nature, and in which each head is independent of the others, and can be immediately applied. The discourse, in such cases, has, in effect, its conclusion scattered throughout the development.[1]

2. The application at the close of the development.

This is the appropriate place, whenever the different heads of division do not permit an immediate application. Such is almost always the case in the argumentative, and to a considerable extent, in the persuasive development.

[1] See fine examples of this kind of application in Dr. Wm. M. Taylor's volumes entitled, "The Limitations of Life and other Sermons," and "Contrary Winds and other Sermons."

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3. The application both during the development and at its close.

Whenever an application has been made during the development, it is also well to add a brief one at its close, in which you may condense into a few expressions, or into a single one, the several points which you have made; or you may dismiss your hearers with directions how to perform what you have enjoined.

IV. The forms of the conclusion.

These may be reduced to three—recapitulation, inference, and exhortation. They are not infrequently united in the same conclusion.

1. Recapitulation is needed whenever the application depends on the several main heads of the development. It is then desirable to cause them all to pass in review before the hearer, that he may more deeply feel their force. It is usual to combine this form with another, and to introduce the recapitulation first, in order to make it serve as a basis for what is to follow. It is most frequent in argumentative and persuasive discourses. The recapitulation should be brief, so that the mind can take it in at a glance. It should generally follow the order of the development, so that the mind may more easily retain it. It need not always employ the exact words in which the principal points were stated in the development. If the recapitulation can be so made that each main

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head can be condensed into a single word, it is well thus to abridge it.

2. The inferential conclusion is a logical deduction from the truth set forth. The inference may be drawn either from the entire development, or from a part of it; if from the whole development, it is well first to recapitulate the main heads of the division. This form of application is most frequent in explanatory and argumentative discourses. It may be derived from the development with various degrees of logical severity. It may have so remote a connection as to be united to the development only by the law of suggestion, containing a thought, which comes into view by the light reflected from the development. When this is the case, the inference is commonly termed a remark. This form of the conclusion admits of almost endless variety, and the skill of the preacher is shown by the manner in which he uses it. He needs, however, to be on his guard against its common abuses. He should see to it that his inferences are in reality inferences from the development, and not mere appendages to it; that they do not grow one out of another, but all out of the development, and that they are not so numerous as to injure the designed effect of the sermon. They should also be so arranged, like arguments in the argumentative development, as to be cumulative in their effect. The divines of the last century are noted for the large number

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of inferences which they made in their discourses. For example, Pres. Edwards, in his sermon entitled "Men naturally God's enemies,"[1] (Rom. v. 10. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.") has sixteen pages of development, and eleven pages of application, in which he dwells at length on six inferences and their subordinate divisions. Dr. Emmons, in his sermon on "Human and Divine Agency inseparably connected,"[2] (Gen. xlv. 5. "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you, to preserve life.") has six pages of development, and eight of inferences. At times the inferences form the main heads of the discourse, whenever the theme does not need development by the other methods indicated. This is a favorite method of Dr. Wm. M. Taylor, as seen in his volumes above named.

3. The exhortation (or direct appeal) is generally found united with one of the other forms of application. It stands alone in the conclusion whenever the development is of such a nature as to require neither recapitulation nor inference It is found most frequently in the persuasive discourse. Skill in this form of conclusion is the most difficult of attainment. It requires, at once, ample materials, great delicacy, and deep feeling

[1] Vol. IV., Ser. 3. [2] Vol. II., Ser. 30.

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Here the preacher must be a law to himself. He should be on his guard not to let his hearers anticipate his appeal.

In regard to these three kinds of application, no rules can be given which shall enable one to decide in every case what form of conclusion a given development may require. The preacher must rely on his judgment to determine what kind of conclusion will in each instance best promote his design.

V. The desirable qualities of the conclusion.

1. Unity.

(1.) The unity of the conclusion in itself; so that there shall be in it no irrelevant thought.

(2.) The unity of the conclusion with the development; so that the entire sermon shall form a complete unity.

(3.) The unity of the conclusion in its design; so that it shall tend to produce one effect. Here the question arises: Is it well to have what may be termed a double application in a sermon? My reply would be, that, in general, it is not advisable to use the double application. It is usually better that you make the entire development and application have direct reference to a single class of hearers, and if you refer to other classes, to do so only incidentally. Such incidental remarks will often have a more powerful effect on those to whom they are addressed, than the most direct

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and urgent appeals. Often, also, it is well to address what you have to say, to your whole audience without regard to their classification. But whatever be your design in the discourse, you should compose it with the application which you are to make, in full view.

2. Simplicity.

(1.) In thought. The thought should be as clear as the sun. There should be no attempt to reason, or to be profound.

(2.) In expression. The language should appear artless, and should be that of a man who is so much in earnest in what he is saying, that he cannot stop to adorn his style. The language should be that of emotion, and such language is always simple.

3. Energy.

The conclusion should be full of energy, coming from one whose heart is so affected by the truth which he presents, that he cannot rest till he makes his hearers see and feel it, as he sees and feels it himself.

4. Brevity.

As you are now in the sphere of the emotions, remember the adage, that "Nothing dries up sooner than tears," and do not allow the feeling which you have excited to cool, before you shall have fashioned it into an act of the will. If you employ the inferential conclusion, do not attempt to set forth all the inferences which can be drawn

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from the subject. Two or three good inferences well set forth, will make a deeper impression than many imperfectly handled. Aristotle recommends that the closing sentences of the peroration be compact, and without connectives.[1] The preacher should strike quickly, and surely, and then stop.

[1] "Rhetoric," B. III., Chap. 19.

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LECTURE XVIII.

ILLUSTRATION IN THE SERMON—DEFINITION—ADVANTAGES—SOURCES—ABUSES.

Since in most of the principal parts of a sermon the thought may be made vivid and forcible by illustration, it would seem proper at this point to discuss the province of illustration in the sermon.

I. The etymology of the term, illustration—from *illustratio*, that which sets forth in a clear light, makes distinct and vivid—pretty accurately defines its use in pulpit discourse. Its object is to set forth the truth in such clear and striking forms as shall make it luminous to the mental vision, and impress it deeply upon the mind and heart. This it seeks to do mainly by means of rhetorical figures—comparisons, examples, similes, metaphors, parables, and the like. The main thought of the sermon thus becomes the focal center upon which is poured the rays of light gathered from every quarter, giving to it both intense light and heat.

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II. Among the advantages of illustration in preaching, the following may be named.

1. A good illustration makes the truth clear. The great themes of the preacher must be, from their nature, abstract and remote from common thinking. They have chiefly to do with eternal verities—with God, his character, government, and gracious acts toward man, the human soul, its needs and its destiny—and to be clearly apprehended by ordinary minds, must be presented in concrete terms, and robed in material vestments. This is, in part, the province of illustration in the sermon. It puts abstruse themes into such concrete forms as to make them distinct to the mental vision. Often in the exposition, an apt illustration pours such a flood of light upon a truth as to make it stand forth clear as the sun. In the development, an argument winged with a fitting illustration is more sure to reach its mark. In the conclusion, a happy illustration not infrequently so lights up the path of duty that the hearer sees at once what he ought to do. In short, illustration is needed in well-nigh every part of the sermon to give greatest clearness to the thought.

2. A good illustration also makes the truth vivid. A sermon to be full of power must be full of life. It is not enough that its thoughts be clear to the mental vision, they must be instinct with life, not like the "very dry bones" which the prophet saw, but like them when clothed with flesh, stand-

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ing upon their feet, and moving on, a mighty army Such fulness of life and action can be imparted to the thoughts only by illustration in its various forms. It can so breathe life into dead thoughts that the whole sermon shall pulsate with life.

3. Again, a good illustration makes the truth impressive. This we might infer from the fact that illustration gives clearness and vividness to thought. For the more clearly and vividly the truth appears before the mind, the deeper the impression it makes. If it stand forth like the sun, it will have the sun's power. This our experience proves. The sermons which have most deeply impressed us, and lived longest in our memories, have been those whose themes were best illustrated. It was not simply logic, but logic on fire, and glowing with imagery, that swayed our minds and captivated our wills.

4. It should also be added that a good illustration makes the truth attractive. For it puts the truth into picturesque forms, and causes it to pass in panoramic grace before the mental vision. Children are proverbially pleased with pictures, and they are scarcely less so when grown to maturity. Hence the preacher who sets forth divine truth in pictures is sure to attract the people. They will flock to hear him, and will hang on his lips. Our Saviour, who "knew what was in man" and so knew perfectly his

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mental and spiritual wants, adapted his preaching to this universal craving of man. "The common people heard him gladly," for "he spake unto them in parables"—clothing the truths he uttered, in such living forms of beauty as to attract and captivate the multitudes. In this respect he is a model to preachers in every age, since man is everywhere the same. And the preachers who have most closely imitated him in his form of presenting the truth, have always been most popular with the people.

III. Passing now to the sources of illustration in the sermon, we note the following:

1. The preacher may gather abundant illustrations from the study of nature.

The material universe of God, and his revelation of himself in the Sacred Scriptures, are interpreters of each other. They alike express the thought, character, and purposes of the one Infinite Being, and each needs the aid of the other in order to be best understood. Like two suns in the heavens, they flood each other with their light. Especially abundant in apt illustration of divine truth is the physical universe. Throughout its vast domain the preacher may roam with ever fresh delight, to find everywhere awaiting him appropriate and impressive illustrations of the truth which he is commissioned to proclaim. If he will but become a constant and earnest student of nature, alive to

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her changes, and responsive to her moods, he will find her continually suggesting to him through simile, metaphor, parable, and the like, new and attractive forms in which to set forth the themes of the Gospel. Hence, next to diligent study of the divine Word, he should give himself to careful study of nature, with all the aids that modern research puts at his disposal. The discoveries of the telescope and the microscope, and other marvelous results of searching investigation of nature, as recorded in physical science, become his servitors in setting forth divine truth. He should keep open eyes and attentive mind to nature, and come into such close sympathy with her in all her forms and moods, that she shall be constantly suggesting to him figures by which to make the doctrines of revelation more vivid, impressive, and attractive. His great model in this respect should be the "Great Teacher," who knew nature so well, and was in such perfect harmony with her in all her phases, that he drew from her, at will, the most vivid illustrations of the truths he spoke.

2. The preacher may also gather copious illustrations from the study of man:—

(1.) As seen in his constitution.

Since man was made in the "likeness of God," he must in the very constitution of his being reflect the Divine thought and will embodied in the sacred Scriptures. Light was not more truly adapted to

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the eye of man, than divine truth to his entire being, and were it not for the depravity of his nature, he would delight in the truth as the healthy eye rejoices in the sunlight.

Hence, he who would be skilful in presenting this truth to man, must know him so well as to be able to appeal to that which inheres in his very nature, and to find in it striking analogies and correspondences to the truth which he utters.

(2.) From the study of man, also, as seen in what he has done, the preacher may obtain a large supply of illustrations.

(*a.*) Here lies open to him the vast domain of history both sacred and secular. The record of man as given by Divine inspiration is a well-nigh exhaustless store-house of pertinent illustrations, and examples from it are powerful with the people. The wise preacher will have Biblical history at command, and often use it to enforce the truth. If he shall also be a diligent student of secular history, he will find it prolific in apt and forcible illustrations of scriptural truth. He will make his people see "God in history," as in revelation, upholding throughout the ages the right, and overthrowing the wrong.

(*b.*) Biography, too, both Biblical and secular, proffers to him its treasures. He will find the Scriptures rich in illustrations of this kind, and he can use them most effectively in enforcing the

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truth. The people are so familiar with the recorded facts respecting Biblical characters, that pertinent illustrations from them are especially powerful. Then, secular biography throws open to the preacher its vast store-house of illustrations. The literature of Christian biography is peculiarly rich in this species of material for the pulpit, and the preacher should endeavor to become familiar with the lives of the great leaders of the church in thought, in piety, and in labors. But he should not restrict his reading to Christian memoirs, for he will often find in the recorded lives of those outside the church, most apt and forcible illustrations of divine truth.

(c.) Literature, science, and art, also, hold out to him a well-nigh inexhaustible supply of illustrations. Man has so fully embodied and revealed himself in what he has wrought out in science, art, and literature, that they form, as it were, another self, and the well read and skillful preacher can make them pour floods of light upon human character, duty, and destiny. These vast realms of thought, through which man has traversed and left records of himself, should be explored for illustrations by him who would become a master in pulpit discourse. But he should not allow himself to pursue these studies to the neglect of immediate preparation for the pulpit.

(3.) Again, from the study of man, as seen in

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what he is doing, the preacher may gain abundant illustrations. Here is thrown open to him the vast arena of every-day life, in which myriads of human beings are contending for existence, wealth, fame, and countless other objects of desire. Individual and social life, with their almost infinite phases and revelations, life agricultural, commercial, civil, and religious, with their numberless anxieties, responsibilities, and experiences, and the great outlying world of struggling humanity with all its hopes and fears, furnish inexhaustible stores of illustrations to the observant and thoughtful preacher. If he will only keep himself in closest contact and sympathy with men in all these varied relations, obligations, and trials, he will never want for pertinent illustrations of divine truth. A Guthrie and a Beecher show us what can be done in this direction.

Our Lord was remarkable for the number of illustrations which he drew from common life. He was one of the "common people," mingled with them in their daily life and toil, knew their joys and sorrows, and had perfect sympathy with them in all their trials, and so "never man spake like this man" in illustrating divine truth from every-day life. Let him who would become skilled in this manner of preaching most carefully study the discourses of Christ to see how frequently, naturally, and pertinently he introduces incidents from daily life to render what he taught more clear and

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impressive. Let him also note how every illustration is made so perfectly to subserve the thought, that it alone stands forth robed in light.

3. Lastly, we should add, that the preacher may obtain abundant illustrations not only from the study of nature, and of man, but also from his own creation. He may bring them into being through the exercise of his imagination. If he will properly cultivate his imaginative faculty, he need never be in want of appropriate illustrations drawn from this source. His brain will teem with them. And the use of them is perfectly legitimate. Our Lord often employed them. The allegory of Bunyan, and the fables of Æsop are not less attractive and powerful because the characters in them are imaginary. But we should see to it that, like good paintings, these creations of the imagination conform to nature, and that we give our hearers to understand that we are not stating facts.

IV. Coming now to speak of the abuses of illustration in the sermon, we hardly need say that the use of an illustration when not called for, is an abuse of it. But to be more specific, we note the following:

1. A preacher should not employ illustrations which themselves require explanation. For in such case the very purpose of illustration is defeated. But an illustration that would be most apt and forcible to one audience, might be mean

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ingless and powerless to another. Hence a preacher should know his hearers in order to make his figures light up the thought which he would have them see.

2. A preacher should not use illustrations merely for ornament. Although beauty is desirable, yet so weighty are the themes of the Gospel, and so serious is the mission of the preacher, that he should introduce into the pulpit nothing for mere ornament. He may indeed array the truth in beautiful robes, but he should make it appear that these vestments exist for the truth, and not the truth for the vestments.

3. Nor should a preacher use illustrations in excess. He should ever keep in mind the province of illustrations in the sermon—that they appear in it only to accomplish certain definite ends, —and should introduce no more of them than are needed for this purpose. To crowd a large number of needless illustrations into the sermon, as animals into the ark, is indicative at once of poor taste, and poor rhetoric. Perhaps the young minister needs to be cautioned on this point, as the present tendency seems to be in the direction of excessive illustration. A profusion of rhetorical figures may as effectually conceal the thought, as a basket of flowers the golden coin that lies beneath them. Do not let your sermons run into stories and anecdotes.

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4. A preacher should also guard against sameness of illustrations. He should carefully avoid this, if he be specially familiar with some department of literature or art, lest he draw thence too many of his illustrations. For example, some preachers are continually quoting Shakespeare as if his writings were the whole of literature, others as constantly draw their illustrations from Bunyan, while others still derive theirs mainly from some one of the physical sciences. The preacher should aim not less at variety of illustration than of thought.

5. It remains to add that a preacher should not allow his illustrations to overtop his thought. He should not for a moment forget that the truth which he presents is the sovereign, and that all his figures of speech should be but her attendants and servitors to increase her dignity and authority with the people. He should never permit them to usurp her throne and wield her scepter. He should be on his guard, too, if he have an affluent imagination, lest his illustrations, like a necklace of pearls, conceal the thread of the discourse, and wholly attract attention to themselves.

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LECTURE XIX.

STYLE IN THE SERMON—DEFINITION—QUALITIES—PERSPICUITY—PURITY.

In treating of style, I shall not attempt an extended discussion of the subject (which my limits forbid), but shall notice in a brief and very practical manner the chief qualities of the style adapted to the pulpit.

Style may be defined the mode of expressing one's thoughts and self in language. For it includes the expression both of one's thoughts and of one's individuality. "It is the man himself." For as each man has certain characteristics which distinguish him from every other man, so the manner in which each expresses his thoughts in language will be in some respects different from that of every other man. The styles, therefore, of any two persons should be no more alike than are the persons themselves. But while there should be variety of styles as of faces, there should be certain qualities which inhere in them all. These I purpose briefly

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to notice, having special reference to the style appropriate to a sermon. They are perspicuity, purity, precision, simplicity, energy, elegance.

I. Perspicuity.

1. Its etymology—from perspicuitas (*perspicio*), the clearly seeing through a thing, as through the atmosphere, an object—gives us its meaning. It may be defined as that quality by which the thoughts intended to be conveyed are made clearly visible. It is the fundamental quality of all good writing and speaking. Quintilian terms it "the greatest excellence in discourse."[1] Without it the very object of language is defeated. And just to the degree in which our thoughts shine through our language, will they be effective. Hence, he who is commissioned to utter the most momentous truths which human lips can express, should acquire the ability to set them forth in such manner, that they shall be clearly seen.

2. Among the causes of obscurity of style may be named the following:

(1.) The want of clear apprehension of the ideas to be expressed. It is evident that one cannot convey to another a clearer conception of a thought than that which he has himself. If the idea which he tries to set forth be poorly defined in his own mind—if it be enveloped in mist to himself—he will find it difficult to give a

[1] 'De Institutione Oratoria," L. 1., C. 6, 41.

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clearer view of it to another through the medium of language. Writers who are in a fog themselves will befog their readers.

(2.) The use of obscure words. However clear the ideas which a speaker or writer wishes to convey may be to himself, if the words by which he sets them forth have no clear and well-defined meaning to those whom he addresses, he will find that they will also have a very misty conception of the ideas themselves. He must not only have a clear conception of a thought which he would express, but must also clothe it in intelligible language, if he would give his hearers or readers an equally clear apprehension of it.

(*a.*) Technical and scientific terms are a fruitful source of obscurity, and should be sparingly used by a preacher, since few of his audience will understand them. For example, in referring to geology, he should not speak of the Silurian, Devonian, and Carboniferous formations, or to zoology, of the Vertebrates, Articulates, Mollusks, Radiates, and Protozoans. Scientific and technical terms should not indeed be entirely discarded, especially theological terms, but when used they should generally be accompanied by an explanatory phrase.

(*b.*) Obsolete words also sometimes cause obscurity in language. Words, like fashions, may become obsolete. The writings of Chaucer and Spenser need a glossary in order to be well un-

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derstood, and the same is true, though in a less degree, of the works of Shakespeare. Hence a preacher, conversant with such authors, should guard against using words from them, which though familiar to him, would not be understood by an audience of ordinary intelligence.

(*c.*) Obscurity in words may also result from the use of certain derivatives from foreign languages, whose meanings are not generally well understood without a knowledge of those languages. Since the English language is largely eclectic, having drawn most liberally from other languages, it contains, in addition to its large Anglo-Saxon element, a multitude of foreign words, many of which are not clearly understood by the common people. Now, the preacher, who has learned the meaning of such terms mainly from a knowledge of the languages from which they have come, should guard against using them too frequently in addressing those who cannot, like himself, at once comprehend the meaning of the word from a knowledge of the elements of which it is composed. While not discarding such words, he should use them sparingly, and always in such connection that their meaning may be readily understood.

(*d.*) Again, the use of a word in different meanings in the same sentence not infrequently makes the sense obscure. Human language, as is well known, is made up of signs which by common con-

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sent stand for ideas or conceptions. At first, each word had but a single meaning. It was called into being to express some definite object or idea. But as those who used the language grew in intelligence, and gained ideas faster than they found new words by which to express them, they were obliged to use the same word in different senses—to give to it besides its first and original meaning other significations. And this process has gone on until there are very few words of much age in our language, which are not made to stand each for several ideas. Now it is evident that if a word be used in different senses in a sentence, it will, unless care be taken, tend to confuse the hearer or reader, who will always be in doubt which of the various meanings to give the term. Care also should be taken to avoid using important terms—especially theological—in different senses in a discourse, and when such use seems necessary, the different senses in which the term is employed should be clearly indicated.

(3.) But obscurity of style may result as well from obscure construction, as from obscure words. The meaning of a writer or speaker may be as effectually hidden by a poorly constructed sentence, as by any defect in the words which compose it. Two or three of the more common faults of construction are the following;—

(*a.*) The remoteness of the relative from its an-

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tecedent. They should, of course, come as near together as possible.

(*b.*) The remoteness of a subordinate clause from that which it qualifies. This is a fruitful cause of obscurity in sentences. The clause should, like an adverb, be brought into close proximity with whatever it modifies.

(*c.*) Sentences of undue length. It is often difficult to keep in the memory the various modifications which a thought receives in its progress through a very long sentence. Unless the sentence be constructed with great care, the mind will become confused amidst the labyrinth of qualifying phrases. Long sentences are not to be wholly avoided. They are sometimes needed to give variety to one's style, but when used, care should be taken so to frame them, that the meaning of each part may be understood as the sentence advances; or, if the sense be suspended till near the close of the sentence, there should be a repetition of the principal word or words on which the grammatical construction depends.

3. Among the means of attaining perspicuity of style may be noted the following.

(1.) Shun the causes named which produce obscurity.

(2.) Keep in mind the intellectual condition of your hearers; and employ only such language and forms of construction as will make the ideas which

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you would convey, easily understood by them. Perspicuity of style is not an absolute quality, for a style which would be perspicuous to one audience might be obscure to another. Hence a preacher should take into account the intellectual condition of his hearers, in order that he may adapt his style to their needs. Endeavor, therefore, not only to know the degree of intelligence which the majority of your people have, but also the manner in which they think and express themselves, and adapt your style, as far as proper, to their mental habits.

(3.) Use largely words of Anglo-Saxon origin. Dr. Trench thinks that, "If the English language were divided into a hundred parts, sixty would be Saxon, thirty would be Latin, including of course the Latin which has come to us through the French, five would be Greek; leaving the other five, perhaps too large a residue, to be divided among all the other languages, from which we have adopted isolated words." [1]

These Anglo-Saxon words are most used and best understood by the masses. Indeed, the language of common life is largely made up of them. They form the language of home and of business. It is always the language by which we express deep feeling. Hence it is evident that the preacher who shall use most largely this form of speech, will make himself best understood by the people. And

[1] Quoted from Marsh's "Lectures on the English Language," p. 119

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one can do this without descending to vulgarisms. It is not necessary to be inelegant in language in order to make large use of Saxon words. Some of our best writers—as, for example, President Woolsey,—are noted for their use of these words.

(4.) Study authors who excel in perspicuity of style. The writings which should be carefully read for this purpose, are those of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Addison, and Irving; and to these should be added the English Bible. Mr. G. P. Marsh has found by actual count that, "in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, (first four hundred and twenty verses,) there are eighty-eight per cent. of Anglo-Saxon words; in Shakespeare, Henry IV., Part 1, Act II., ninety-one per cent.; in Addison, several numbers of Spectator, eighty-two per cent.; in Irving, Stout Gentleman, eighty-five per cent.";[1] and these he gives as fair examples of the predominance of Anglo-Saxon words in the works of these authors. In the English Bible he finds "a vocabulary, wherein, saving proper names and terms not in their nature translatable, scarce seven words in the hundred are derived from any foreign source."[2] It is a hopeful sign for our Anglo-Saxon speech, that the best English and American writers of the present century employ it more largely than did those of the last, and we may hope that the time

[1] "Lectures on the English Language," p. 125.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

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is not distant, when our best authors shall return to the simplicity and vigor of style which characterized the early English writers.

II. Purity.

1. Purity of English style is that quality by which thoughts are set forth in language of which the words, and their meanings, and their construction are thoroughly English.

2. It is a quality next in importance to perspicuity itself. For though perspicuity does not always depend on purity of style, yet it is largely indebted to this quality. One may, perhaps, to certain audiences, express his meaning more clearly by using an impure style—for example, a style largely made up of slang words and phrases,—but generally it will be found that purity of style is essential to greatest perspicuity. To the scholar, purity of style is a quality of no little value. For the purer the medium through which he gains knowledge, the more quickly he acquires it. His native tongue is that through which, during a lifetime, he is both to study the thoughts of others and to communicate his own. Hence it is greatly for his interest to promote in every possible way its purity. And purity of style is no less valuable to the preacher. For the more momentous the truth which is to be conveyed through the medium of language, the more important is it that such medium be pure. The preacher, therefore, should

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be of all men most interested in making the language which he speaks, as pure as possible.

3. Impurity of style may result from three causes,—impurity in words, in their meanings, and in their arrangement in sentences. This division, suggested by Quintilian, as Dr. Campbell tells us, is followed by him in his "Philosophy of Rhetoric," and seems the best for the treatment of the subject. I shall notice briefly each of these heads, with special reference to the pulpit, leaving you to pursue the topic more at length in extended works on style.

(1.) From the use of words not purely English. As language is a fashion, so, like other fashions, it is undergoing changes in words, in the meanings attached to them, and in their construction. A word that is in fashion in one age, may be out of style in another. The umpire which must decide in every case, is the usage of the best writers and speakers of the language. Whenever, then, a writer or speaker employs a word which is not used by those who write and speak the language best, he commits what is termed a barbarism in language. This is done in various ways, as for example, the following:

(*a.*) By employing obsolescent and obsolete words. Since words are liable to pass from good usage, to become less and less employed, until they wholly retire from good English, unless one look

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carefully to his language, he may find himself, now and then, using words which have had their day and been cast aside. He should especially be on his guard in this respect, if he be conversant with such early English writers as Chaucer, and Spenser, or even Shakespeare. For many of the words which were in fashion when they wrote, have been forced to give place to others. It is true that many of these Saxon words and phrases are again coming into use, but one cannot with more impunity anticipate fashion in language, than in dress. He must go with it. Says Max Müller, in his able work on "The Science of Language," "Although there is a continuous change in language, it is not in the power of man either to produce or to prevent it. We might think as well of changing the laws which control the circulation of our blood, or of adding an inch to our height, as of altering the laws of speech, or inventing new words according to our own pleasure."[1]

But though we may not use many of the terms employed by the early English writers, yet it is allowable, whenever we have occasion to quote from them, to cite their precise language, however obsolete it may be. But never affect antiquated English, as some persons, antiquated dress.

(*b.*) By employing foreign words not naturalized. While words are dropping out of our language, it

[1] Page 47.

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is replenishing itself by receiving, in various ways, new terms. One of these sources of increase is the incorporation into itself of words from other languages. This is often a great convenience, and sometimes becomes a necessity. As knowledge grows, and the arts and sciences multiply, new terms must be found by which to express new ideas. The ancient languages, especially the classic tongues, furnish by various combinations abundant terms to supply these needs. The nomenclatures of the arts and sciences, which they give us, are of great value, as they furnish a common language for all who study those subjects. Yet besides these terms, there are words which occasionally appear in our language, but which have not been recognized as belonging to it, and are not employed by our best writers. Such words, like foreigners in our Republic, may, after a suitable length of time, become naturalized, but they must previously for some time be put, as it were, on their good behavior. Such, for example, has been the history of the word *ignore*. The attempt, we are told, was made in Dr. Johnson's time, to introduce it into our language, but it failed. It has been on trial since, and now, after almost a hundred years of probation, it has worked its way into good usage.

(*c.*) By employing new words not yet recognized. As the vocabulary of our language is constantly

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increasing, not only by the addition of words from foreign tongues, but also by the manufacture of terms wholly new, or of terms formed by compounding two or more old ones, it will often happen that such words will present themselves to us for recognition and use. And it frequently requires nice judgment to decide whether to reject or to accept such a word. The length of time during which the word may have been before the public, is not the criterion by which a decision must be made. However long the word may have been before the public, if it have not secured for itself recognition by the best speakers and writers of the language, it should not be adopted by us. As "confidence is a plant of slow growth" in respect to men, so it should be in regard to such words. Let them have a fair trial, and then, if they prove themselves worthy, it will be time enough to admit them into our vocabulary.

(2.) From the use of words and phrases with meanings not in accordance with their signification in pure English. This fault is termed by grammarians an impropriety. Since each word is a sign of one or more ideas or relation of ideas, it is manifest that unless such word be always used in one of these acknowledged and definite significations, it will not only be used improperly, but will also confuse the reader or hearer. Being ignorant of the new sense given to it, he will be somewhat

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in the condition of one addressed in an unknown tongue. In vain shall we employ only words of established reputation, and constructions conformed to grammatical and rhetorical rules, if we do not also give to the words which we use, their proper and recognized meanings. But as these terms are liable to change their old meanings for new ones, or to take additional significations, care should be taken to employ them only in those senses which are recognized at the time, by the best writers and speakers. It is sometimes difficult to know just when it is proper to use a word in some meaning which it may have recently assumed. For example, the word *contraband* has, within the last few years, been used among us to signify not only "prohibited merchandise or traffic," but also "a negro slave." In such cases of doubt, we should be guided by the standard authority—the usage of the best writers and speakers. In the use of words as of articles of dress, it is better to be a little behind the fashion than before it.

(3.) From the use of sentences not constructed in accordance with English idioms. This is termed a solecism. The arrangement of words in a sentence may be as much at variance with pure English, as words and their meanings. Every language has forms of construction peculiar to itself—its idioms—to which those must conform, who would speak and write the language correctly. To com-

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mit a solecism is, in a writer, a grave offence, because he is supposed to know at least the grammar of his own language. Passing over very numerous cases of this kind, which may be found noticed in most of our grammars and rhetorics, let us refer to two or three of these errors into which one, unless on his guard, is likely to fall.

(*a.*) The indiscriminate use of the subjunctive and indicative moods in conditional sentences. Since both forms are thus employed by good writers, their indiscriminate use should, perhaps, be called an inconsistency rather than an impurity in construction. As to which mood is preferable, there is much discussion, but there is now a manifest tendency to the exclusive use of the indicative. Many good writers use in this form all verbs except the verb *to be*. Dr. Webster strongly advocates the use of the indicative mood in all verbs to express a present or past event conditionally, and this, he maintains, is in accordance both with the analogy of the language, and with the usage of its best speakers and writers.[1]

Dean Alford, in his little work entitled "The Queen's English," while admitting the strong tendency of the subjunctive mood to retire before the indicative, would have the subjunctive form retained in a conditional sentence, whenever the speaker or writer intends to express doubt, and

[1] See pp. 52-54, Introduction, Webster's Dictionary, 1848.

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he approves of the rule laid down by Dr. Latham by which to determine the fact, viz., "Insert, immediately after the conjunction, one of the following phrases: (1.) as is the case; (2.) as may or may not be the case. By ascertaining which of these two supplements expresses the meaning of the speaker, we ascertain the mood of the verb which follows. When the first formula is the one required, there is no element of doubt, and the verb should be in the indicative mood. If (as is the case) he is gone, I must follow him. When the second formula is the one required, there is an element of doubt, and the verb should be in the subjunctive mood, If (as may or may not be the case) he be gone, I must follow him."[2]

(*b.*) The insertion of an adverb between the sign of the infinitive and the verb. Dr. Bushnell, in his volume entitled "The Vicarious Sacrifice" (page 193,) writes thus, "On the whole, it does not appear that, previous to entering on his public ministry, when he was thirty years old, he has done anything more than to beautifully and exactly fulfill his duties." Prof. Shedd, in his Homiletics (page 190), says. "It is not enough to barely state a proof." Although this form of construction seems to be coming into general use yet it has not the highest authority in its favor.

4. To attain purity of style we should,

[2] "The Queen's English," p. 211.

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(1.) Guard against the causes named which produce impurity of style. For this purpose we should study carefully the best treatises upon the English language, and especially such dictionaries as Webster's, Worcester's, The Century, and Standard.

(2.) Endeavor in conversation to use language in its purity. We should avoid the use of slang. We may be choice in our diction without the appearance of effort or affectation. We should note the manner in which accomplished conversationalists express their thoughts. Dr. Webster maintains "that general and respectable usage in speaking is the genuine or legitimate language of a country, to which the written language ought to be conformed." [1]

(3.) Read with care the authors noted for purity of style. Especially should Addison, Irving, and Hawthorne be read for this purpose.

(4.) Write with constant reference to this quality. Grammar and dictionary should be always at hand for consultation in every case of doubt. Keep for constant reference a catalogue of the unauthorized words and phrases in common use, to avoid them.

[1] Introduction, Dictionary, p. 54.

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LECTURE XX.

STYLE IN THE SERMON—QUALITIES—PRECISION—SIMPLICITY—ENERGY—ELEGANCE.

III. Precision is the third characteristic of a good style which we notice.

1. It is that quality of style by which the exact ideas designed to be conveyed, and those only, are expressed. Vinet has well pointed out the distinction between propriety of style and precision, by showing that propriety requires accuracy of words as signs, and that precision requires that their number be reduced to what is necessary.[1] Hence, precision of style in pulpit discourse must be to some degree a relative quality. The character of the audience and the nature of the theme must determine in each case how fully the subject should be developed. But, whatever be the theme or the audience, precision requires that no more words be used than are needed accurately to set forth the thought, and to gain the end in view.

[1] Homiletics, p. 352.

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This the etymology of the term indicates. It signifies "a cutting off before," and so comes to mean a removing of all superfluities from the statement of a thought.

2. Of the great value of precision of style to the preacher, little need be said. The instructiveness and power of his preaching will largely depend upon it. He has to deal not only with great facts, but also with great ideas—truths that require for their proper setting forth accuracy of expression. For they are largely truths without the range of common thinking, and about which not a few persons have very misty conceptions. Now it is the preacher's mission to make these truths stand out with such clear outline and vivid distinctness that they shall have full power over his hearers. By precision of style he will also, in no small degree, increase the interest of his audience in his discourse. He will not, by misty explanations, needless repetitions, and irrelevant thoughts, cause their interest to flag, but will carry it forward constantly deepening, as the waters of a river moving toward the ocean. Hence this quality greatly contributes to give to the thought of a sermon the "constant progress" so highly commended by Theremin.

3. To gain precision of style we must,

(1.) Learn to think precisely. Precise speaking and writing will follow only precise thinking. We

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must, then, think through the subjects of our sermons as well as around them, if we would set them forth to the people in bold outlines. We should not begin to write until the subject in its full development appears luminous before us. Having thus a clear knowledge of our theme, we shall know just what we wish to say, and shall not be likely to repeat ourselves, or, enveloped in mists, to wander from the true course of thought, but seeing with clear vision the whole way as it stretches before us, we shall be able constantly to advance with no uncertain or irregular steps.

(2.) Study and copy writers most noted for precision of style. We should carefully observe in what manner they develop thought. For this purpose it is often well to take Dr. Franklin's method —to read a page or two of one of these authors, and then, closing the book, to see with what precision we can set forth in our own words what we have read, and then to compare our composition with the original. It is also well to take this course with a Greek or Latin classic, and, when we have done our best in the translation, to contrast it with the text. It was by intense study of the writings of Thucydides that Demosthenes attained his marvelous precision and vigor of style. The writings especially commended to you for study are those of "Junius," John Foster, and Daniel Webster.

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(3.) Study dictionaries and treatises on the use of words, to learn the exact meaning of words nearly synonymous. For this purpose the discriminated synonyms found in Webster's Dictionary are very valuable. Two or more of the dictionaries named should be made a daily study by one bent on excelling in precision of style.

(4.) In writing, ever aim at the utmost precision of style. We should try to set forth thought exactly as it lies in the mind, to find out the most fitting words by which to express it, and to use only whatever terms may be needed for this purpose. Especially should we guard against a slipshod manner of expression.

IV. Simplicity.

1. We would define simplicity of style as that quality by which thoughts are set forth in an inartificial manner. The derivation of the term—from *simplex* (without a fold, or having one fold, as opposed to *multiplex*, having many folds)—suggests its meaning. It is allied to perspicuity, but differs from it, since a style may be perspicuous without being simple.

It is a quality of style that contributes in no small degree to the effectiveness of a sermon. It is adapted tc the various intellectual conditions of an audience. In nearly every congregation are to be found persons of very diverse degrees of

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intelligence, from the illiterate to the liberally educated. Hence, a style which would be appreciated by the more intelligent part of an audience might be, from its want of simplicity, almost powerless over the remaining part.

It also opens a way to the heart. The heart knows its own language, and is moved only by it. It will not open itself if addressed in any other. It detects all disguises. Now the language of the heart is always artless. It never thinks of the form in which to express emotion. It is too much occupied with the emotion itself to think of the language in which its feeling should utter itself. When, therefore, it is addressed in any other language, it is inclined to suspect that the speaker cannot be wholly sincere. And when the heart has this lurking suspicion, it will not open itself readily, if at all, to appeals from such a source. Hence it is important to the preacher to acquire a style of discourse as simple as possible.

2. To acquire this quality of style we should,

(1.) Speak from the heart. We should be thoroughly sincere in all our pulpit utterances, and not say anything because it is expected of us, but only what we feel, and so must speak. Thus our utterances, always coming from the heart, will naturally and readily clothe themselves in simple expression, and will go straight to the hearts of others.

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(2.) Make the plans of our sermons as simple as possible. We should not forget that simplicity in a plan is not inconsistent with its originality, for a plan may be both simple and original. It should be original in its simplicity. We cannot bestow too much labor on the thoughts which we embody in a plan, while we cannot too carefully avoid putting them into an artificial form. The first plan which suggests itself is not always the simplest. It is well to arrange the several parts of a plan in the order in which they would naturally occur to one's mind.

(3.) Read with care such authors as Chaucer and Spenser, Goldsmith and Irving, noted for the simplicity of their style. Observe in their writings the absence of all apparent art, see how naturally thought follows thought, how gracefully each illustration comes forth to serve the theme, and with what ease the thoughts move forward in their development.

V. Energy.

1. The Greek word ἐνεργεια, action, (from ἐνεργής, active, working,) indicates the meaning of energy as a quality of style. It stands for that characteristic in style which results from a mind thoroughly aroused, and intent on uttering its convictions. It is that quality of style by which thoughts are forcibly expressed. Dr. Webster defines it, "Strength of expression, force of utter-

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ance;" Dr. Campbell calls it "Vivacity;" Dr Whately, "Energy;" Professor Vinet, "Strength;" Professor Shedd, "Force."

2. The great value of this quality of style to a preacher must be evident. Many of the truths which he is commissioned to set forth to the people, are of such infinite moment to them, that it is of the first importance that they be presented in the most forcible, though tender, manner. While there are some truths of Christianity which do not need to be set forth with as much strength of expression as others, yet the whole truth of God as revealed in his Word would seem to require greater energy of statement than truths which relate merely to this life. And, then, it must be confessed that not a few of these Biblical truths are not only uninteresting, but even distasteful, to unrenewed men, who will not give to them earnest attention unless urged by others. Hence, the more forcibly and vividly a preacher sets forth these great themes of revelation, the greater will be his success. A Whitefield, a Wesley, and a Finney show us what power lies in this manner of presenting the truth.

3. As to the means of attaining this quality of style, I must refer you for full particulars and discussion to such extended works on style as those of Dr. Campbell, Archbishop Whately, and Professor Phelps. It is my purpose to indicate only

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the chief means by which this excellence in pulpit discourse may be acquired.

(1.) We should try to feel the full force of the truth which we are to present. We should meditate on it, pray over it, until it shall enter into and become, as it were, a part of our being, and stir the soul to its depths. Thus full of the truth and quickened and energized by its power, we shall naturally lay hold of forms of expression full of vigor and force. Deep feeling will always find forcible utterance. People always speak forcibly when angry, or when aroused by any deep feeling. So will it be with the preacher. When he feels most deeply he will speak most forcibly.

(2.) Use, as far as propriety permits, specific rather than generic terms. For the more specific the term, the fuller the description, and so the more vivid will be the conception. But in the use of such terms care should be taken not to go beyond the bounds of propriety. Sometimes a generic term is desirable to soften an expression.

(3.) Use, in general, the metaphor rather than the simile. Since a metaphor is a condensed simile, it is the more forcible expression. It needs but a statement of the two sentences—The English fought like lions at Inkermann, and, The English were lions at Inkermann—to see which form of expression is the more energetic. When Daniel Webster said of Alexander Hamilton,—" He smote

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the rock of the national resources, and abundant streams of revenue gushed forth. He touched the dead corpse of the Public Credit, and it sprung upon its feet,"—how he would have shorn these sentences of their strength had he removed his metaphors and put in their place similes.

(4.) Make large use of figurative language. For figures of speech breathe life into thought, and so give vividness and power. But they should not be used to such excess as to smother the thought to which they have given life.

(5.) Use no more words than are needed. It is with thought as with gunpowder; the more it is condensed the greater its power. Powder which scattered over a surface burns without force, might, if confined within a rifle, do fearful execution. So is it with ideas. The more briefly they are expressed the more forcible they are. It is this which largely gives aphorisms their power. Hence, we should be sparing in the use of epithets, and be careful not to burden our sentences with them. They should be employed only when needed, and then they will be all the more impressive. Mr. Webster was remarkable as well for his economical use of epithets as for his felicitous use of them.

(6.) Make prominent, as far as the English idiom permits, the most important words of a sentence. The Greek and Roman languages have a manifest advantage over the English tongue in the promi-

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nent position which they are able to give to the chief words in a sentence. The idioms of those languages allowed writers to place the word which they would make most emphatic, either at the beginning or at the end of a phrase or sentence, so that the whole force of the expression might rest on that one word, much as a blacksmith throws the whole force of his arm into his hammer as it smites the anvil. This the construction of our language permits only to a very limited extent, and hence, as Dr. Whately (to whom I am indebted for several suggestions on style) observes: "We are often compelled to mark the emphatic words of our sentences by the voice in speaking, and by italics in writing, which would, in Greek or in Latin, be plainly indicated, in most instances, by the collocation alone." Still we may make some approach to the construction of the ancient classics in the location of emphatic words, without doing violence to the genius of our language. We naturally speak thus when in deep feeling. "Never will I submit," exclaims the angry, determined man. "Push things" was the flying order of Grant to Sheridan.

(7.) The use of antithesis gives energy to style. The opposition in words or sentiments which it brings before us, causes them, by reason of the sharp contrast, to stand forth with vividness. But since it is a manner of expression very liable to abuse, care should be taken that the antithesis lie in the

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thought and not in the mere form, and be not carried to excess. Some years ago not a few of our ambitious young writers were running into excessive antithesis, in fancied imitation of Macaulay.

(8.) Energy of style is also promoted by the use of the climax, in which the members of a sentence are so disposed, that the thought rises in importance as it moves forward to its culmination at the end. When the Apostle Paul, instead of simply reminding the Corinthian Christians that "all things are yours," goes on to say, "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's"—with what strength and majesty does the thought rise before us to its infinite height! But we should be careful not to use the climax too frequently, lest we defeat the end in view.

(9.) The use of the interrogative form of expression contributes not a little to energy of style. Often it is the strongest form of assertion. It is especially adapted to the sermon, in which, in its true sense, the preacher is carrying on an elevated conversation with his auditors, plying them, now with arguments and motives, and now with questions, as he "reasons with them from the Scriptures." It was a favorite manner of speaking, with the Apostle Paul. His epistles are full of questions. And he sometimes gives the interrogative

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form additional force by joining with it the antithesis, or the climax, or both. What can be more forcible than his answer to his own question, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" or, than the enumeration of his trials, in the passage beginning with his question, "Are they Hebrews?" in which these three forms of expression are combined? But since the interrogation is a form which, if a preacher like, he is especially liable to use to excess, we should guard against employing it too frequently. Some sermons are well-nigh filled with a series of questions.

Several other means might be named for attaining this quality of style, but as most of them have been noticed in what has been said under the other qualities, it does not seem necessary to refer to them in detail. Such are the suggestions made in treating of perspicuity, and precision, since whatever promotes those qualities of style contributes also to its vividness and energy.

A single suggestion may be added:—

(10.) Pore over writings noted for energy of style. In this respect the Bible is a model. What utterances can be more forcible than many of those in Job, in the Psalms, and in Isaiah? Read Demosthenes more than any other classic author to gain energy of expression, and the speeches of Charles James Fox, who, as Sir James Mackintosh has said, "was the most Demosthenean speaker since

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Demosthenes."[1] Study also the Letters of Junius, the Essays of John Foster (noted as well for energy as for precision), and especially Shakespeare, as remarkable for this, as for every other quality of a good style.

VI. Elegance.

1. The Latin source of this word (*eligere*, to pick out, choose, select,) points to its meaning as a quality of a good style. It implies that the writer has been intent on choosing such forms of expression as gratify a refined taste. Hence elegance of style may be termed that quality by which thoughts are so expressed as to be pleasing to good taste. In its largest sense it includes the thought as well as the expression, for true beauty of style cannot exist unless it adorn beautiful thought. Perhaps no other word more fitly expresses this quality than appropriateness. For example, a beautiful style in a sermon largely consists in a style that is appropriate to the preacher, to the subject and its development, and to the occasion and audience. Socrates called the most common utensils beautiful, if adapted to their end. So is it, in no small degree, with language as the vehicle of thought.

It is an important quality of style to a preacher. He will, doubtless, find among his hearers some of fine æsthetic culture, and many who have a nice sense of propriety in speech. If he often

[1] Goodrich's "British Eloquence," p. 460.

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disregard these proprieties, he will greatly injure his influence with the most intelligent of his congregation. And he need not sacrifice this quality in order to express himself with energy. For they are not at variance. In nature, beauty and strength are seen in unison.

2. As related to the preacher, this quality requires that his style be a true expression of himself, that it represent the man speaking forth the truth in a manner accordant with his nature. It implies that he is so under the power of the truth and so in sympathy with it, that it takes possession, as it were, of his whole being, and elevates and fashions both thought and speech. Thus what he says will be a true expression of himself, and will have an element of beauty, for it is always agreeable to hear a man speak like himself in his best mood.

3. In respect to the subject, elegance in pulpit discourse requires that the style be in harmony with the truth set forth. The themes of the Gospel, beautiful in themselves, should be clothed in beautiful vestments. But each requires for its proper setting forth a style in some respects peculiar to itself. Ideally, each Biblical truth should have its own style, which he is most likely to attain, who comes into closest sympathy with that truth.

4. In regard to the development of the theme, elegance of style demands that the whole de-

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velopment be in keeping with the truth presented.

(1.) The plan should have beauty in all its parts. It should be rather a growth out of the divine germ in the text than a fabrication, and hence should have unity, simplicity, symmetry, and order. Thus it would not withdraw attention from the thought, but would serve as the graceful form through which the truth would naturally develop itself.

(2.) Then, the words should be choice. They should be neither of ignoble ancestry nor of low association—words pleasing to the ear and instinct with life. But while they should often set forth the truth in picturesque forms, they should not be so profuse in imagery as to give no repose to the style, without which it cannot be truly beautiful.

(3.) The words, too, should be so disposed in sentences as to give harmony to the style—harmony not approaching the measured rhythm of poetry, but peculiar to prose. Hence, the sentences as they follow each other should assume different forms, for monotony in style is as disagreeable as monotony in life.

5. Again, this quality in a sermon requires that the style be appropriate to the occasion. The fitness of a secular oration to the time, place, and circumstances of its delivery gives to it not less beauty than force. The address of Mr. Webster

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at the laying of the corner stone of the Bunker Hill Monument is indebted for not a little of its beauty to his felicitous references and allusions. The brief address of President Lincoln at Gettysburg is a gem all the more beautiful from its appropriate setting in the associations of the place. Occasions like these rarely attend pulpit discourse. Yet every sermon should be so responsive to the occasion which calls it into being that it shall be in the truest sense beautiful. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Such fitness to the occasion requires in a preacher at once great delicacy of feeling and keen discernment.

6. Moreover, elegance in discourses from the pulpit requires that the style be suited to the audience. Without this adaptation, though a sermon have every other excellence, it cannot be truly beautiful. For it comes into being to promote the welfare of the hearers, and can attain its end only so far as it conforms to their needs. To give to a sermon in all its parts this adaptation (which in its largest sense includes the thought as well as the expression), must be well-nigh the despair of a preacher who has any just conception of what a sermon should be. It requires of him such knowledge of his hearers, of their different degrees of intelligence, their ways of thinking, their trials, hopes and fears, and such hearty sympathy with

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them in all their varied needs, together with such keen perception of what is befitting in speech, that he shall know just when, and how, to set forth to them the different themes of the gospel.

7. The statement of what elegance in pulpit discourse requires, sufficiently indicates, perhaps, the path to its attainment. It is a path not easily trodden. Indeed, ideal beauty is as difficult of attainment in composition, as in painting and sculpture. Shakespeare shows not less genius than Raphael, and Michael Angelo. But it is comforting to know that one, without the genius of a Shakespeare, may be a good preacher.

Two or three additional suggestions may not be out of place.

(1.) The constant endeavor to maintain elevation of thought and feeling, contributes not a little to the attainment of this quality of style. Our thoughts and desires give law to our language. If we have truth and beauty in the inward parts, they will appear in what we say.

(2.) The constant study of the beautiful in nature, literature, and art, tends to impart elegance to one's style. Here open before us vast domains through which we may pass with continual delight and instruction. The marvelous revelation of the beautiful in nature, and its reflection in the varied forms of art and literature, cannot be studied without leaving their impress upon the style.

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(3.) A careful revision of what we have written, to remove inelegancies of expression, will greatly contribute to the beauty of our style. But we should not be solicitous about this quality while composing.

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THE SYNTHESIS OF A SERMON.

LECTURE XXI.

THE SOURCES OF THE MATERIALS OF SERMONS.

Next in order after the analysis of a sermon and a discussion of each of its principal parts, properly follows the synthesis—the gathering and uniting of the various materials which should compose a discourse, so as to form a symmetrical whole.

I. The sources of the materials of sermons.

1. The revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures.

The Bible is the great store-house of materials for sermons. It is the thesaurus of the preacher. He who shall have made its treasures his own, though he be poor in respect to all other materials, cannot be an uninstructive preacher; while one however well versed in all other learning, will be, at best, but a dry and inefficient preacher, if he have not command of these rich treasures. The sacred orator, therefore, who "gives diligence"—or, as it is in the expressive original, "makes haste" ("σπούδασον," 2 Tim. ii. 15,)—"to present

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himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth," must give himself to the study of the Scriptures with an assiduity and a persistency that shall know no weariness, and shall continue during life. He must daily study the word of God with all the helps at his command, addressing himself to the work of mastering its profound doctrines and mysteries, until the whole system of divine truth shall stand luminous before him. To this end he must make this book the one great study of his life. Every other study must be made subordinate to this. On the truths of the divine Word, he must meditate day and night, giving himself wholly to them that his profiting may appear to all.

The best method by which to advance in the knowledge of the Bible, is not to study it spasmodically—as a whim may take you—and without plan, but regularly and systematically. Let a part of each day, at an hour when your mind is most fresh and vigorous, be sacredly set apart to this study, and then, taking up some book of the sacred writings, pursue the study of it daily, until you shall have mastered it—or as nearly so as you are able. By following this method, you will be surprised and delighted to find how much sacred learning you will have acquired in a single year. It is these daily accretions of knowledge that in course

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of years make up a vast amount. Perhaps the best time for such work is the first hour in the morning after you enter your study, and before you begin to labor on your sermon. This Biblical exercise will give you a fine preparation for the composition of your discourse. You will, of course, if able, study the Scriptures in their original form.

2. The revelation of God in nature.

From this book of God may be gathered abundant materials with which to illustrate and enforce divine truth. The book of nature and the book of inspired revelation are counterparts, and the one helps to interpret the other. As both are from the same great Author, so they each illustrate his character. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge" of him. "The whole earth is full of his glory." It is remarkable that the Psalmist, living in an age when the physical sciences were unknown, should have found in nature such abundant materials with which to set forth the Divine character and acts. How much greater are such materials to the diligent student of nature at the present day! What treasures of illustrations of divine truth lie in the various combinations of nature about us,—treasures which have been brought to light by laborious research, and which are ours, if we will but stretch forth the hand for them. He who

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aspires to become master of this exhaustless treasury of fresh and impressive illustrations of sacred truth, must be a most careful observer and diligent student of nature in all the forms in which she presents herself.

3. The revelation of God in providence.

It needs no close observation to discern clearly in the light of the sacred Scriptures the character of the Deity from his dealings both with individuals and with nations. No one can read the records of our race, imperfect as those records are, without everywhere seeing "God in History." No one, also, can attentively observe the events of his own time, without discerning the same great fact. Now these divine providences, so various and impressive, furnish to the preacher who makes them his careful study, inexhaustible materials, with which to illustrate and enforce Biblical truth.[1] Such a preacher every providence of God will instruct. He will skillfully avail himself of these providences to set forth more clearly, and to impress more forcibly the truths of inspiration. But here two cautions need to be given, lest he make those providences the themes of his sermons, and not inspired truth, which those dealings of God are designed to illustrate and enforce; and also lest he be in haste to generalize from single instances,

[1] See Rev. J. S. Sewall's article on "The Uses of History to the Preacher, in the *New Englander*, July, 1863.

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thus placing himself in the category of those reproved by our Saviour for their hasty inference in regard to the persons on whom the tower in Siloam fell.

4. The revelation of God in man—in the construction of his mental and moral constitution. Since man is made "in the image of God," we must know man, in order to attain the clearest possible conception of God. To the preacher this knowledge is especially important, because it is essential to much usefulness in the ministry. The degree of success to which a preacher will attain as a divine instrumentality for converting men, will, with other things equal, correspond to the degree of skill with which he presents divine truth to the mind and heart. The Deity will not suspend or modify the laws of mind which he has established, in order to aid an unskillful preacher. If, then, he shall outrage the laws of man's mental and moral constitution, he must expect to fail, in great measure, of success in his labors. How important, then, that he understand the laws which govern the action of the mind in every stage of its advancement, from the presentation of a truth before it, to its action in view of that truth. What vast materials of motives lie in such knowledge! He who would become mighty as a preacher, must wield them. Let him avail himself of every aid within his reach to acquire this knowledge, and

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make it a chief study through life. Let him read the best treatises on mental philosophy, and also the tragedies of the great masters, who depict so wonderfully the action of the human mind, and let him constantly study men wherever he goes. Dr. Emmons in his "Memoir of himself," says, "I read deep, well-written tragedies, for the sake of real improvement in the art of preaching. They appeared to me the very best books to teach true eloquence. They are designed to make the deepest impression on the human mind, and many of them are excellently calculated to produce this effect. A preacher can scarcely find a better model for constructing a popular, practical, pathetic discourse, than a good tragedy; which all along prepares the mind for the grand catastrophe, without discovering it, till the whole soul is wrought into a proper frame to feel the final impression."[1]

5. The productions of man in literature and art.

Man, also, in his little sphere is himself a creator. He produces thoughts and conceptions—ideals which he often strives to embody in words, or in material forms. Hence result the various forms of literature and art—a world of which man is the creator. In producing these results, the mind does indeed receive external aid, but the

[1] Quoted by Prof. Edwards A. Park, Works of Dr. Emmons, Vol I., p. 74.

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conceptions and combinations are all its own. The author of the Iliad did not create the facts and legends, but the conceptions and combinations were his. Shakespeare availed himself of external aid, took many of his characters from history, but the matchless creations were all his own. The whole of "Paradise Lost" is a conception of the poet, called into being by a few plain facts. In the same manner Mrs. Stowe took a few facts of slavery, and with their aid produced a thrilling story of her own conception.

By a similar process come forth the material forms of architecture, painting, and sculpture. The Cathedral of St. Paul was in the mind of Sir Christopher Wren before he embodied it in marble and mortar. The majestic dome of St. Peter's was in the mind of Michael Angelo before it rose sublime above the palaces of the Imperial City. The same might be said of Rubens' masterpiece,—"The Descent from the Cross," and of the works of all the great masters in painting and statuary. Now these almost endless productions in literature and art are of great value to the preacher. Aside from the refinement which they impart to his taste, and finish to his style, they furnish very important materials for sermons, especially in the department of illustration. Hence, the preacher should, if possible, make himself familiar with the great masters in every department of literature and art.

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Let him study them during life, but always hold them subordinate to graver studies. But let him not waste his time on the frivolous literature of the day. Dr. Emmons would not allow himself to look at books of general reading in his hours devoted to study.

6. The results of one's own thinking.

The materials produced by the preacher himself should constitute a large part of those embodied in every discourse. If he is to bring forth to his people things new as well as old, if his discourses are to be fresh and instructive, he must largely originate materials, and not content himself with merely retailing what others have produced. If he degrade himself to so menial a service, he must expect both to be dwarfed intellectually and to have his preaching uninteresting and unedifying. Let him produce materials by the action of his own mind, meditate profoundly on the theme on which he intends to discourse, analyzing it, looking at its relation to other truths, and thus evolve original materials for his sermon. The amount of such materials which wait to be evoked by the intense action of the mind on any subject, is surprising. Themes seemingly the most unfruitful, when made the subject of long continued meditation, are found germinant with thoughts. Hence the preacher should not content himself with ascertaining what others have thought on his theme, but should en

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deavor to know it himself, to reduce it to its elements, to see around it and through it—in a word to know it thoroughly—before he attempts to combine his materials, and build up his discourse. Do your own thinking, if you wish to be a fresh, attractive, and instructive preacher.

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LECTURE XXII.

METHODS OF COMPOSING SERMONS—INVENTION OF MATERIALS—ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIALS.

II. Next in order after the discussion of the sources of the materials of sermons, naturally follows a delineation of the method of gathering these materials and building them into sermons. This process is termed composing a sermon. I here use the term "composing" in its broadest sense, as including the whole process of constructing a discourse, and not the mere writing of it. In ancient rhetoric this process was divided into three parts, Invention, Arrangement, and Elocution,—invention designating the act of searching out and gathering the proper materials for an oration, arrangement the act of putting these materials into a definite plan, and elocution the act of embodying the thoughts thus invented and arranged, in appropriate language. The term elocution as now employed, describes only the manner of delivering a

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discourse, and not its embodiment in language. I shall use the term "composition" to include invention, arrangement, and composition in its restricted sense. Invention would thus characterize the act of a preacher in selecting his theme, and in finding proper materials for his discourse; arrangement would set forth the act of properly adjusting these materials; and composition in its narrower sense would express the act of developing the thoughts thus arranged. In carrying forward each of these processes in the formation of a sermon, preachers employ various methods. I am now to treat briefly and in a practical manner of invention, arrangement, and composition.

1. The invention of the materials of a sermon.

(1.) The selection of a subject.

The theme of a sermon should not be taken at random, but chosen in view of one or more of the following circumstances.

(*a.*) The special moral and spiritual needs of the hearers. The mission of a preacher is to apply divine truth to the hearts of men. He is to take the remedies which the gospel offers, and apply them to the diseased soul for its recovery. Hence, to be successful in this application, he must know his patient, as well as his remedies. He must know just when to apply certain truths, and when to withhold them. In every one's pastoral life, there will be times when some particular phase

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in the moral condition of his people—as in seasons of revival, of religious declension, and the like,—will demand that he discourse to them from a narrow range of topics. There will also be, at times, religious errors abroad among them, which require immediate correction, and occasionally doubts and difficulties in doctrine or morals, which he should at once endeavor to remove. Hence, it is evidently very important that a pastor know his people as thoroughly as possible, that he so understand their religious views and feelings as always to be able to present to them the truth best adapted to their religious condition. In this connection, we see the great value of pastoral visitation to a preacher. If rightly conducted it is the best method a pastor can take to become acquainted with the religious needs of his flock, and no pastor should give up the faithful performance of this duty until he is sure that he well knows the spiritual condition of every one of his people.

(*b.*) A special providence of God. There are times when God speaks to a community most impressively by his providence, throwing light on the declarations of his word, and urging them powerfully on the heart. A wise preacher will avail himself of such occasions to impress on his hearers the lessons which these providences teach.

(*c.*) The preacher's mental condition. The

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mind in reference to subjects of thought, has its likes and dislikes, which come and go apparently obedient to no fixed law. Without knowing why, we find ourselves at one time attracted to a theme in which at another we feel no interest whatever. At such time of indifference to a theme, it is useless to attempt to force the mind to fruitful thought. It may be goaded on to produce a sermon on such a subject, but the discourse will be a meager production. To do its best, the mind must be allowed to take the subject to which at the time of composition it is inclined. It will then work naturally, and so freely and effectively. Care, however, should be taken not to go so far in this direction, as to make one's self a slave to every whim and change of feeling. In order to aid the mind to make a proper selection, it is well to keep a variety of themes always at hand.

It hardly need be remarked, that the circumstances which should have influence in the selection of a subject will not be found in practice to clash, if a preacher will but keep himself in close connection and sympathy with his people. For being then subject to the same influences as his congregation, he will be similarly affected by them.

(2.) The order of the selection of text and subject.

To the question whether a text or a subject should be first chosen, it may be replied that no

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rule applicable to every case can be given. On this point, good preachers differ in practice; some almost always select themes first, and then search for texts appropriate to them, while others as generally come to their themes by having them suggested to their minds by passages of Scripture. The former is the method recommended by Dr. Campbell. But it has many disadvantages, of which two may be named—its tendency to prevent unity of text and sermon, and to cause paucity of subjects. The method of deducing a subject directly from a text, is the more agreeable to nature, and to the true ideal of a sermon, and is, I think, generally to be preferred. If a preacher study his Bible as he should, he will find themes for every topic of pulpit discourse suggested to him, so that he will rarely be under the necessity of searching throughout the Scriptures to find some passage which he can make stand as godfather to his theme. It is not well, perhaps, to adhere exclusively to either method. Something, too, must be conceded to different casts and habits of mind. Some preachers study everything by subjects, others delight in the exegetical method of study, and the manner in which each provides himself with themes for sermons, will be influenced by his peculiar turn of mind.

(3.) The method of obtaining an abundant supply of themes.

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In order to have always at hand a variety of subjects, so as not to be compelled to waste time in searching for one at the moment of need, some such method as the following should be observed.

(*a.*) The diligent study of the Scriptures with this end in view. Accustom yourself in your daily reading and study of the Bible to be on the look-out for subjects of sermons, and whenever you find a passage which opens richly to you, dwell on it, brood over it, until the thought which it contains shall assume definite shape as a theme. It would also be well at the time, if you have the leisure, to sketch the main thoughts of the discourse, without perhaps stopping to arrange them. You can place the result either in the margin of your Bible, or in a blank book kept for this purpose.

(*b.*) The diligent study of your hearers and of men generally, with this end in view. An intimate knowledge of the religious condition of your hearers, of their trials, temptations, and necessities, will suggest to you many themes for sermons. So also will the study of mankind in general. Wherever you go, you will find a field fruitful in this respect. Accustom yourself to study men with this object constantly in view. Be always on the alert to secure suitable themes for your pulpit. You will thus find the conduct of men suggesting constantly to you texts of Scripture, and throwing on them new light.

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(*c.*) The treasuring up of whatever themes come to you, in some convenient form. It is well to have a note-book of a size suited to the pocket, that you may always have it at hand to note down a subject whenever occasion requires. Some ministers put such notes on slips of paper, and file them for use.

(4.) The method of collecting the materials.

I wish here to describe the process of gathering the materials of a sermon, from the point which the preacher has reached when he has selected a text, fashioned his theme in the rough, and fixed on the object which he desires to accomplish. This process is essentially the same, whether the development of the sermon is to be the explanatory, the argumentative, or the persuasive. The following is the method in its order.

(*a.*) The careful study of the text and context in the original. To this the preacher should first address himself. He should consult no commentary until he has done all that he is able to do, with the aid of the original text and the dictionary, to master the passage himself.

(*b.*) The judicious study of commentaries. Valuable aid may in this way be gained, but it is often overrated. It is not well to give yourself to an indiscriminate reading of many commentaries. Generally it is better to consult two or three judicious and sound expositors than many

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Do not hastily surrender your own judgment when it has been formed by a careful examination of the original text. Learn to respect your own opinion of a passage, when it has been carefully formed. And that your interpretation of a passage may be worthy of your respect, be a constant and earnest student of the Scriptures.

(c.) Intense and prolonged thinking on the subject of the discourse. Without close and protracted meditation on the theme which you design to develop, every other aid will be of little avail. Without such thinking, you may indeed glean from other sources sufficient materials for a sermon, but it will be made up of incongruities, and will be very apt to be in great measure destitute both of unity and of power. The amount of valuable materials obtained by such earnest and persistent meditation on a theme is surprising. Be not discouraged, if your subject shall not, at once, yield you a rich harvest of thoughts, but persevere, and you shall fill your garner. Do not desist from the investigation of your theme, until you feel assured that you know not only it, but also its relations to other important truths, and to humanity. Make every faculty of your mind aid in this work. Let the memory and the imagination serve the reason, and all combine to develop and illustrate the theme. As one

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result of this process of accurate thinking, you will often find it necessary to refashion your subject—to remodel or limit it, so that it may more nearly express the exact thought of which you have now gained a more clear and just conception. You should not cease effort in this direction until your subject shall express precisely—as far as language can do it—the thought of the text, which it is your purpose to develop and apply. Having thus gained an accurate conception of the thought which you wish to unfold, you will more readily and easily move along the line of its development to gather the appropriate materials. In order to make this process of thinking and investigation less difficult, it is well to have some general guide. This may sometimes be a series of questions, as: What are the arguments which sustain my position?—the objections to it? and the like. To render this process of investigation and discovery, which at best is arduous, as easy as possible, we should carefully avoid blending it and carrying it forward with another process to which it is diametrically opposed, viz., the process of arrangement. No mind can carry on, at the same time, easily and rapidly, these two processes of discovery and arrangement. For they are utterly dissimilar. In the one, the mind is intently searching for materials, and is in an inquiring condition; in the other, the mind is bent on marshaling the materials into

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a plan, and is in a deliberating and constructing mood. If, now, the mind attempt to conduct these two oppcsite processes simultaneously, it will find itself harassed and impeded by this unnatural method. But this is not all. It will be under the necessity of readjusting its plan with each discovery of materials, and, of continuing this needless and disheartening labor until all the materials for the sermon shall have been gathered. But if, on the other hand, the mind shall first give itself wholly to the process of finding suitable materials for the discourse, and, when it shall have gathered sufficient materials, shall then apply itself wholly to the process of arranging them, it will find the labor required in making the plan much less than by the other method. To do its best in this work, the mind should range through the realm of thought for its materials as freely as a sportsman roams through a forest for game, not stopping during the excitement of the hunt to study and classify what he gets, but intent only on bagging it. It will be time enough to inspect and classify the game when the hunt is over.

(*d.*) Reference to works of authors in the various departments of knowledge. Important materials for a sermon may often be gathered in this way, but care should be taken not to approach these sources of information until you have, with the aids and in the manner described,

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done your best to master your subject. Any other course will tend to make you simply a receptacle for other men's thoughts, and you will be fortunate, if you do not, at last, lose your self-respect, and the respect of your hearers. A consultation of such authors is mainly valuable as a means of refreshing the mind with facts and thoughts previously acquired. But in transferring such materials to your sermon, you should be careful to have them pass through the crucible of your mind. Whenever you have occasion to introduce a passage from another, you should give your hearers clearly to understand that you are quoting, and they should know as well when you end, as when you begin the quotation, though it is not always necessary that they be told the name of the author. I need not here spend time in warning you against the evil results of relying on such so-called aids as "Pulpit Assistant," "Encyclopædia of the Pulpit," and the like, for no preacher who has a proper respect for himself, and for his people, will avail himself of them for immediate use.

2. The arrangement of the materials of a sermon.

Having gathered the materials for your sermon, the next labor to which you must address yourself, is to put what you have collected, into the proper form—to classify and arrange these

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materials in such manner that they shall be found in their appropriate place, in the plan of the discourse. This labor is easy compared with that of discovery. Having materials in abundance lying before you, you have now only to carry forward the simple process of selecting and arranging them. A careful inspection of what you have gathered will doubtless reveal to you many materials which you will feel compelled to cast aside. There may be arguments which impartial judgment will pronounce fallacious, or unsatisfactory; objections which it will seem needless to notice; illustrations which will appear unsuitable; and various other materials which will be found irrelevant. The first thing to be done, then, is to make this careful inspection, and to reject relentlessly whatever will not stand the test of severe and impartial scrutiny.

The next step in the process is to adjust the materials which remain. The arguments, motives, and the like, which are to be the main thoughts of the discourse, should first be selected to constitute the chief heads of the plan, care being taken, that they conform in all respects to the "Rules of the division" which have been given. Their order in the plan should then be settled, and will, of course, be determined largely by the nature of the subject, and by the character of the hearers.

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By a similar process, the remaining materials are gathered under their appropriate heads, and the work is done. It may be added that it is best to arrange the materials for the body of the discourse, first.

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LECTURE XXIII.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MATERIALS OF A SERMON.—METHODS OF DELIVERING SERMONS.

3. The development of the materials of a discourse, I have termed composition in a restricted sense. Good preachers differ widely as to the manner of developing the plan of a sermon. I shall notice briefly the three chief methods employed.

(1.) The method of writing the entire sermon without stopping to correct what has been written.

Having finished his plan, the preacher chooses the hours of a day when he is best prepared for mental labor—the morning hours are the best,—and, thinking over his subject until he is in full sympathy with it, takes his pen, and earnestly enters on the writing of the sermon. He does not stop to refashion sentences, to consult dictionary, or authors, but simply marking a word or sentence that may need further attention, drives his pen as far as his physical and men-

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tal energies will permit, and then lays aside his work. Another day he begins afresh his labor, reads over what he has written so as to put himself again into full sympathy with the course of thought, and then pushes on his pen, if possible, to the completion of the sermon. The hours of another morning will often be needed to revise the discourse, and perhaps to rewrite it. This method is strongly recommended by such high authority as Dr. Doddridge,[1] Prof. Channing,[2] Dr. Porter,[3] Prof. Shedd,[4] and Prof. Park.[5]

It is favorable to continuity of thought, and to naturalness and force of expression.

(2.) The method of revising the sermon at the time of writing it.

In this case, the mind of the writer is fixed on the expression as well as on the thought; he is constantly deliberating as to the form which a sentence should take, and is often stopping to revise a sentence, or to consult an authority. This method, though promoting accuracy of expression and elaborateness of style, is unnatural, and is not to be recommended. By thus stopping to correct what has been written, and to consult authors, one almost invariably loses the train of thought, or becomes so cooled from

[1] "Lectures on Preaching," p. 67.
[2] "Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory," p. 214.
[3] "Lectures on Homiletics and Preaching," p. 67.
[4] "Homiletics and Pastoral Theology," p. 133.
[5] "Bib. Sac.," Oct. 1871.

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the glow of composition that he finds it difficult to start again. Hence, his sermon will have the appearance of having been produced piecemeal, and will lose in naturalness, force, and vivacity, more than it may have gained by elaborateness of expression. The authors just now cited are decidedly opposed to this method.[1]

(3.) The method of developing the thoughts of the sermon in the mind, without putting them on paper.

A preacher who adopts this course, takes up in succession each part of the plan which he has written down, and goes through this plan developing fully each thought in his mind without the use of the pen; and continues this process, often going through the sermon in this way several times, until he is quite sure that he has it at command. This method is more favorable than the former methods, to naturalness, variety, and force of expression, but is not so favorable to accuracy and elegance of language. Among other arguments in its favor, is the relief which it gives from the drudgery of writing, and also the time which it saves for other labors. There is high authority for this method. Bautain, who strongly recommends it, advises to make the plans as short as possible that they may be easily retained by the memory.[2]

[1] See especially Channing's "Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory, p. 214.

[2] Bautain's "Art of Extempore Speaking" p. 210.

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Dr. Richard S. Storrs, who has long practiced this method with eminent success, says, "I wrote for many years, fully, and carefully. I now write only a brief outline of the discourse, covering usually one or two sheets of common note-paper, and have no notes before me in the pulpit—not a line or a catch-word."[1]

III. The methods of delivering sermons.

Able preachers have employed various methods. Let us notice them briefly.

1. The method of reading a sermon from a manuscript.

This is an unnatural way of addressing an audience, if the object be to move to action. No one would think of taking this method to influence another in any of the common concerns of life. Its proper place is the lecture-room where men are to be instructed rather than incited to action. It tends also so to trammel a speaker as to prevent him from using in the most effective manner his arms and eyes. It also fosters artificial tones and formal delivery. It is exceedingly difficult for one to read a sermon with natural tones. But the evils attendant upon this method may, in part, be obviated by making yourself so familiar with the manuscript, and the course of thought of your sermon, as to become master of both. This will also permit you to introduce with effect, what-

[1] 'Conditions of Success in Preaching Without Notes," p. 37.

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ever happy thought may come to you in the delivery of a discourse. To speak well from a manuscript is a very difficult acquirement, and no one can excel as a speaker by this method, who does not devote much labor to acquire the skill.

2. The method of delivering a sermon memoriter.

This is more favorable than the former method to freedom of physical action, but it is also unnatural. Unless a preacher have perfectly memorized his sermon, the attempt to deliver it without notes, will embarrass him to such a degree as to prevent him from delivering it with much effect. His effort to remember, and fear of breaking down, will check the emotion which he would naturally feel in view of the truth, and, giving over any attempt to influence his hearers, he will be mainly solicitous to reach successfully the end of his discourse. Hence, one of the chief objections to this method is the time that is necessarily consumed in committing a sermon perfectly to memory, though one can acquire the ability to memorize a sermon in a comparatively short time. The method has high authority in its favor. Pres. Edwards toward the close of his life regretted that he had not adopted this course in the early years of his ministry.[1] The early New England divines largely practiced this method. On the other hand, Dr. Campbell, after

[1] Edwards' Works, Vol. I., p. 29.

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having followed it many years, began to read his discourses, and as the result gave his decided preference to the reading of a sermon. His words are worthy of note;—"There are, no doubt, degrees of excellence in reading, as well as in repeating, and there are but few, that attain to the highest degree in either. But in what may be regarded as good in its kind, though not the best; I speak within bounds, when I say, that I have found six good readers, for one who repeated tolerably. As to my personal experience I shall frankly tell you, what I know to be fact. I have tried both ways; I continued long in the practice of repeating, and was even thought (if people did not very much deceive me) to succeed in it; but I am absolutely certain, that I can give more energy, and preserve the attention of the hearers better, to what I read than ever it was in my power to do to what I repeated. Nor is it any wonder. There are difficulties to be surmounted in the latter case, which have no place in the former."[1]

3. The method of delivering a sermon extemporaneously so far as the language is concerned.

This method is the most natural. The sermon comes most directly from the heart, and expresses the emotions of the heart at the instant, and when all aglow with the thought. The language is born

[1] Campbell's "Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence," Lec. IV., p. 205.

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of the occasion, and is more apt to be appropriate, direct, and forcible. This method also allows the preacher complete control of his body, so that he can use it to give the best effect to what he utters. He can closely watch his hearers throughout his discourse, and adapt each part of it to their changing moods. The method also promotes naturalness in tones and gestures.

But it is liable to great abuse. The evils apt to attend it, are immature thinking and careless expression, the reiteration of the same thoughts and expressions. But this result is not necessary. These evils may be avoided, in part, by writing the sermon in full, and leaving it at home, when you go to the pulpit. Some preachers, as, for example, Dr. John Hall, and Dr. Henry M. Scudder, pursue this course with great success. A similar method is often employed by eminent lawyers and statesmen. Alexander Hamilton and Lord Brougham practiced it. It would seem best, at least in the early part of one's ministry, to make use of the two methods of reading, and of speaking without notes, each Sabbath—by preparing each week a carefully written discourse, and a plan from which another sermon shall be delivered extempore in respect to the language used. In thus combining the two methods, a preacher will find that his practice in writing sermons will tend to give logic and finish to his unwritten discourses, while these will tend to

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impart flexibility and force to his written productions.

Whichever of these methods you adopt, try by every means in your power to excel in it. You cannot, as ministers, estimate too highly the importance of having a good delivery. Your success as preachers will, under God, largely depend on the manner in which you pronounce your discourses. Give, therefore, great attention to your delivery. Study works on elocution, and practice speaking during the week. Avail yourselves of the criticisms of an intelligent and judicious friend. But never think of rules of elocution while in the pulpit. There give yourselves up wholly to your subject. You will thus reap the advantage of all your previous study of elocution.

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[1] See Supplement, next page.

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